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OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

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OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

BY THE LATE

A. B. DAVIDSON, D.D., LL.D., LITT.D.

PROFESSOR OF HEBREW, NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH

EDITED BY

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PREFACE.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY was Dr. Davidson's favourite study; and the final results of forty years' strenuous thinking on this profoundly interesting subject are contained in the present volume. The very first winter he was professor, Dr. Davidson gave several lectures on Prophecy; and he was still busy with the same subject when, in the end of January 1902, his work was suddenly ended by death.

Every chapter in this book has been taken direct from the manuscript lectures which were used by the author in his classes up to the last. They are therefore to be regarded as giving his latest views, even on those branches of the subject on which he published at various periods of his life. The elaborate article on Prophecy in the *Dictionary of the Bible* is also from his pen. Indeed, it was almost the last thing he published. Now, if any one who has studied that article, and has admired its firmness of grasp and its literary grace, reads this book and then re-reads the article, I am convinced that he will conceive a still higher admiration for its compressed wealth of knowledge—and for this reason. He will then understand, better than he possibly could before, how wide a range of reading it involved, and how much thought and study lie hidden within its terse and polished paragraphs. He will, moreover, be enabled, by comparing the contents of this book with the article, to see with what extreme conscientiousness Dr. Davidson performed every piece of work he undertook. Without reading this volume, no one will be in a

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position to appreciate the pains that must have been taken to recast so completely, for the purposes of a Dictionary article, the mass of material used by the author for the instruction of his students.

The arrangement of the subject-matter adopted in that article has not been followed in the present volume. Any attempt to do so would have involved the taking of liberties with the manuscript far beyond what an editor has any right to take. But the way in which the lectures have been arranged seems quite natural and sufficiently logical; and though there was not the slightest clue to the order in which the various lectures had been delivered, it is believed that they have been put into something like the sequence in which they were originally given. In all probability, however, the whole series as now published was never read to any one class; for, from the amount of material Dr. Davidson left, and from the different forms of what is practically the same lecture, it is certain that he must have been in the habit of selecting sometimes one branch of the subject and sometimes another for full treatment, and then going rapidly over the rest, as time permitted.

It is perhaps scarcely necessary to remind the reader that these lectures represent only a very small part of the work done in the Hebrew classroom to elucidate the teaching of the Old Testament prophets. Lectures were given only twice a week. On the other three days the actual words of some particular prophet were dealt with, as an Exegete and Grammarian should deal with them in the presence of those whom he has trained to follow his exposition.

The aim of the present volume is to trace the rise, development, and gradual extinction of Hebrew Prophecy, to exhibit and explain the general ideas which marked its successive phases, and to analyse, as far as may be possible, the characteristics of this remarkable phenomenon in the

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history of Divine Revelation. Naturally, therefore, no attempt has been made to deal exhaustively with the work of any individual prophet in the way a Commentator or Expositor is expected to do. Any one who wishes to see how Dr. Davidson was in the habit of performing that part of his professorial duties, may consult his commentaries on Ezekiel, Job, or the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Perhaps the most unexpected peculiarity of the volume is, that the author seems to have deliberately abstained from citing the names of individual scholars, especially those of recent times, in support of the positions and opinions which he himself advocates. This is all the more remarkable, when one remembers with how keen and critical an eye, and with what discriminating judgment, he had studied the very latest books on all Old Testament subjects, as his numerous reviews of them abundantly testify. No doubt he does occasionally mention some of those whose views must have powerfully influenced him at an early stage of his career, and particularly the distinguished scholars in his own Church of the generation earlier than his own, whom he evidently delighted to honour. Special prominence is also given, in the chapter on the Isaianic Problem, to Bleek's canons of Prophetic Interpretation. Indeed, had I not been aware that Dr. Davidson, in his very last session, laid emphasis on Bleek's name in this connection, I should certainly have shortened his elaborate discussion of this scholar's position. In the circumstances, however, and likewise in view of the fact that these very positions, formulated about half a century ago, have been so recently and so vigorously challenged in Scotland, I have judged it best to give this lecture just as it was.

I fancy that the most probable explanation of the rarity with which Dr. Davidson refers to living authors by name, is that he had deliberately resolved that his opinions should be taken just for what they were worth, and be estimated by

his students solely on their intrinsic merits. He had no desire that any views of his should be helped to win their way to acceptance by assertions on his part that they were also held by contemporary scholars of acknowledged repute.

It may be that another reason influenced his conduct in this respect. In his inaugural lecture, he publicly pledged himself to the doctrine that the Bible should be interpreted biblically; and that declaration he loyally kept to the end. Hence, instead of buttressing his own position by citing, as is so generally done, the authority of other scholars, he adopted the method of making the prophets interpret themselves, by giving quotations from their own writings, or from the Bible as a whole. These quotations, however, were not mere texts taken at random from a book given to men in some mechanical way as an infallible revelation. They were chosen in accordance with his conviction, that each successive generation had the divine message conveyed to it through the choice spirits of the chosen people of God, the prophets of Israel being an election within an election.

Accordingly, whenever Dr. Davidson accepted a new idea, he first assimilated it to his general position, and then expressed it in his own characteristic phraseology. If, however, he saw nothing true or suggestive in a novel theory, he did not trouble himself to state it to his students with the object of refuting it. He simply ignored both it and its author.

The only other characteristic of the book to which attention need be called, is the popular style in which it is written; and this must be done all the more emphatically, that I have to confess that in my Preface to his *Biblical and Literary Essays* sufficient justice has not been done to this feature of it. So careful has Dr. Davidson been to avoid all purely technical language, and so lightly does he wear his load of learning, that this volume may be read

with pleasure and profit by educated laymen who have no acquaintance with the Hebrew language. Only in a very few instances has it been found necessary to print any Hebrew words.

Now, it is beyond dispute that it is to the influence of these lectures upon successive generations of Theological students that the changed attitude of all the Churches in Scotland to Biblical Science, during the last twenty-five or thirty years, has been very largely due. Apart, therefore, from its intrinsic value as the work of a great scholar and thinker, this book must always occupy a unique place in the history of Scottish Theology.

Finally, there are many who have had their minds disturbed by recent ecclesiastical controversies, and by the bold and even reckless assertions so often made as to what must be the ultimate results of Higher Criticism. As such men should be anxious to obtain, at first hand, accurate and helpful information as to what this Higher Criticism really is, they will do well to study these lectures. Every one who does so will assuredly obtain a true idea of what sane and reverent criticism is; and he will also be enabled to read the Bible itself with a clearer eye and a more hopeful heart.

J. A. PATERSON.

New College, Edinburgh,
November 1903.

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OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY.

CHAPTER I.

Prophecy a Factor in Human History.

To comprehend anything respecting the Old Testament or the New, we must first comprehend something regarding that for whose advantage both Testaments, and all the divine revealing agency connected with them, were set on foot, namely, the human race; and in order to comprehend much regarding the race, we must comprehend something of Him "for whose pleasure they are and were created." God —Man—the Scriptures—that is the order: not God—the Scriptures—Man.

We must therefore assume at the outset that the ideas which we have of God or derive of Him from the Scriptures, are true, that is, truly represent Him so far as they go. The scriptural representations of God, therefore, are not merely fitted for us; but they are true, and fitted for us because they are true. Now Scripture sums up God's character in one word, Love. This is the highest expression of His nature; and in this we find the key to the whole history of the universe, to creation and providence.

Love explains creation: love, as a passive impulse and craving, needs something whereon to expend itself; love, as an active principle of benevolence, is desirous of conferring blessedness. This explains the love-relation in

which newly-created man stood to God. And when man fell out of the sphere of this relation to love, and beyond the attraction of the great centre, this same love explains all the manifold approaches made by God to man, and the whole spiritual agency set on foot to reclaim him, and draw him up again to his original sphere.

Of course, this original relation of man to God, being a relation of love, is ethical, and not physical. It is that of two personalities and wills, even the inferior will being to such an extent independent as to be capable of self-determination; and of so determining itself as to stand in antagonism to the original will. Man is a moral and independent being. The relation in which he first stood to God was a moral relation; the relation in which he is to stand anew is a moral relation; the means, therefore, used to bring him into this new relation must be moral means. Thus grace, or the scheme of salvation, is the great moral agency employed by God for bringing again His moral creature, man, into the perfect moral relation of soul with Himself.

Hence it would be of much service to us if we could banish from our minds all distinctions within the limits of the human race such as Jew and Gentile, and figure to ourselves only a humanity to which God is revealing Himself, and which He is by this revelation gradually lifting up into communion with Himself. That there must be contact somewhere between the race and God is self-evident, because man is ordinarily moved by man; but the point of contact is not thereby altered, or raised above or left out of the sphere of humanity. To take the comparison of Christ Himself, the leaven must first be put into the meal. It will then impregnate the particles with which it comes into immediate contact, and these will lay hold on those next them, and thus the influence will run from the heart to the outmost verge; but the particles of meal first brought into contact with the

leaven have no superiority over the rest. They do not cease forthwith to be meal, or to be part of the same lump. There must be contact somewhere, but the contact is with the human family at some point, central or other. And the design of thus approaching the race is that the influence, so communicated, should reach by sympathy to the very extremest borders of the race; and that all should stand in the relation to God that these elements now do, and in a relation greatly closer. I think some of our confusion of thought and misapprehension of God's ways with man has arisen from failing to conceive the unity of the human race, and to regard the Jewish people as merely the point of union, merely the elevated conducting-rod, so to speak, pointing to heaven, and drawing down an influence to be distributed speedily over the whole earth.

Why the Jews were chosen as the point of first approach, we may not discover. They, no doubt, had, as a family formed under the hand of God, certain characteristics which qualified them better than such philosophic nations as those of Greece or India for being the depositaries of truth and the missionaries of religion. What concerns us is that they were so chosen, and that the choice was not of them exclusive of humanity, but of them as a part of humanity, as a type of humanity—as the leaven of humanity—in a word, a choice, not of them to the exclusion of humanity, but a choice of humanity as included in them. The choice of the Jews was no more exclusive of the human race than the choice of the man, Abraham, was exclusive of the Jewish nation; the whole development was included in the original germ. This idea with which Judaism started, it frequently lost sight of for a time; and finally, to the great majority of the nation, this, its fundamental truth, seemed a falsehood. Later Judaism actually denied the very law of its existence; and even some of the founders of the New Testament Church were long in perceiving this law of the kingdom.

This relation of man to God is the true and final relation; and all other relations, being false and abnormal, can be but temporary. This true relation we are fond of calling a Theocracy; and it is presented to us in Scripture under three aspects or degrees of realisation,—the Old Testament Church, the New Testament Church, and the heavenly state. These three are one, as childhood, youth, and manhood are one. The last is the final realisation of the destiny of the race; the others are partial realisations, and typical of the highest. The last and highest is capable of being presented in the forms that were peculiar to the first and lowest: "And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." [1]

Paul expresses the same thing without figure: "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all"; [2] and so far as the Israelitish nation is concerned, the idea is similarly expressed: "Ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." [3] This kingdom of God, therefore, will first of all unite in one all men, will then unite all men to God, and, finally, will have wider influence even upon the other orders of creation,—for all preparation has been looking forward towards "the dispensation of the fulness of time to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." [4]

Such, then, is the destiny of the human race, and such is the relation of the Israelites to that race, merely representatives, or first-fruits; and when once this is understood, we can better understand the means used by God to realise

[1] Rev. $21^{2,3}$. [2] 1 Cor. 15^{28}. [3] Ex. 19^{6}. [4] Eph. 1^{10}.

this destiny of His creature, man,—one chief means being the dispensation of prophecy. Indeed, in the widest sense of prophecy, the whole Jewish dispensation and all the Jews, especially the patriarchs, might be called prophets. For prophet is little else but *mediator;* and the Jewish nation stood as the mediators between God and the family of man at large, just as the functionaries among the Jews, the prophets and the priests, stood as mediators between the Jewish nation and God. Hence to a people like the Philistines, the Jewish nation, then in the loins and person of Abraham, was a prophet. "Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he *shall pray for thee,* and thou shalt live,"[1] to which the writer of the Psalm refers when he says:

> "He suffered no man to do them wrong:
> He reproved kings for their sakes;
> Saying, Touch not Mine anointed ones,
> And do My prophets no harm."[2]

And even that element of prophecy which is the least essential to its idea, though by some misfortune made to absorb almost all the other elements in our common manner of thinking,—the element of *prediction,*—was strongly exhibited in the patriarchs and the nation. They were living predictions, in their relations to God, of the glorious destiny of all mankind in its progressive union to God.

But when I speak of prophecy, I mean to speak mainly of that institution founded as an institution by Samuel, though existing sporadically in individual members long before his time. And to understand its idea and functions, some notion must be first had of the law. For prophecy stood on the foundation of the law, and was not a separate and independent means of grace and redemption itself. It is not quite easy to understand the exact relation of the law to the ancient Church or to the present Church; but this at least must be assumed, that its relation to the ancient

[1] Gen. 20^{7}. [2] Ps. $105^{14f.}$.

Church was not other in essence than its relation to the Christian. If a Christian cannot be saved by deeds of the law, neither could the Jew,—and for the same reason, because neither of them was capable of fully doing the deeds of the law. If a Christian be saved by grace, so was the Jew. Yet if the law lie on the Christian as a rule of life, so it lay on the Jew; if it be a pedagogue to bring men to the gospel now, it was a pedagogue to bring men to the promised gospel then.

The Old Testament dispensation was not one of law, but of promise,—"for the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."[1] If the law had been given to the Jew as a dispensation of salvation, it would not have been that, but a dispensation of damnation, for "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them."[2] The law as a mere 'handwriting of ordinances,' dogmas, or commands, had within it no power to save; men could not keep it. As mere law, it neither contained within it, nor could furnish any motive to its own keeping, but perhaps, acting on a sinful nature, contained even a stimulant to further sin.

Had the Jewish dispensation been one of a promulgated law merely, by obedience to which salvation was to be had, it would have differed in no point from the heathen dispensations except in this, that the divine hand, so to speak, went right to the human heart of the people, and plucked thence the moral law, dimmed and effaced as it was, and brought it out and printed it in great characters before the people's eyes, that he that ran might read. But the Gentile could not keep the law written on his heart, neither could the Jew keep the same law any better because written on tables of stone. Hence the case

[1] Gal. 3^{17}. [2] Gal. 3^{10}.

of the Jew would have been more wretched than that of the Gentile; for in the one the law slumbered, and he was unconscious of all the heinous deeds he perpetrated; the other would have been haunted by the spectre of an avenging law continually pursuing him, while at the same time perfectly conscious of utter inability to keep the law. "Whereto then serveth the law? It was *added* because of transgression."[1] According to Paul, the law—the whole law, moral and ceremonial too, as an *outward* ordinance—is an addition, a thing not contemplated in the original covenant union as necessary,—an interloper, in short, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. The law here spoken of is not the ceremonial merely, but certainly the moral also; but it is the one and the other,—it is both these considered as an outwardly imposed command. It is not, and cannot be, the moral law as a thing written on the fleshy tables of the heart, which is a thing eternal and immutable. But the beggarly character of the law, the degrading element of it, consists in this, that it was ordained outwardly, and in the fact that the promise was not yet sufficient to bring out fully its letters written of old upon the heart, and make it, *as a law on the heart*, the rule of life, and not as an external command. It was added, this outward command, *because of sin, i.e.* to make men conscious of their sinful nature by the opposition within them which this outward law raised to its requirements. To such extent had evil deadened the conscience of men that they sinned, and were not conscious of sinning. The law on their heart was dimmed and almost illegible, and they knew not when they contravened it. By its being made an outward thing patent to their eyes, and being multiplied into multitudes of commands,[2] the people had begotten in their consciousness the sense of law and its transgression, and thus of sin and guilt, and so were led or driven for refuge to the promise.

[1] Gal. 3^{19}.

[2] Hos. 8^{12}.

One is almost ashamed to dilate so much on these things, but one cannot arrive at a definition of prophecy without some such induction as has been made of those things which prophecy presupposed. There are thus two great lines of influence running through Jewish history,—the promise, ever growing in clearness, and constantly changing its form with the changing history, being uttered through a thousand tongues, all prophetic of the coming One in whom all mankind should be brought nigh to God, but which even now, though only promise, and though changing its form as it developed, was that which drew the Jew into the love-communion with God; and the law, the unchangeable element, the constant condition of communion with God,—a condition not preceding this communion but rather succeeding it, not bringing about the union, but brought about by it,—the very element of moral purity and holiness in which the union subsisted—the realising of the words, "Be ye holy: for I am holy."

It is just these two lines which the prophetic order seeks to develop—to keep alive and to enlarge the sense of the promise, the Messianic hope, the theocratic destiny of mankind, and to realise the law, the condition and ethical element of all theocratic life, of all love-communion with God. "The prophets," as Tholuck says, "were the living depositaries of the idea of the theocracy or kingdom of God,"—they were, in a word, the ancient preachers of the Church. In their relation to the law they differ from the Levites in this—the Levites explained the law, the prophets enforced it. They went down into the very deeps of it, and came up armed with its fundamental principle, the very concentration of its elements into one formula—*the retributive righteousness of God;* and with this terrible weapon they sought to curb and coerce the idolatrous and immoral leanings of their nation, and hold their hearts true to the allegiance of the living God.

In their relation to the promise, they differ from the priests in this,—the priests symbolised the promised salvation

by their acts, the prophets by their words; the priests enter by the blood of atonement into the fellowship of love with God; the prophets by the indwelling spirit. And both, when they enter, go in as mediators, taking the people with them, symbolising Him who is for us entered within the veil, taking all His people with Him. The activity of the priests was very much more circumscribed than that of the prophets. The activity of the former was very much around a single element—blood, atonement, being the great invariable element underrunning all forms of the theocratic life; the activity of the prophet corresponded to all the relations of life and activity into which the people entered. And the Jewish commonwealth was a progressive development and working out of the problem of salvation; it contained within it a divine seed which it had to mature into life, and thus it went through successive changes, in all of which the prophetic body, as the bearers of the Messianic consciousness of the nation in its liveliest form, had the deepest share.

This peculiarity, that the Jewish State was at the same time the kingdom of God on earth, made the prophets statesmen, as being enlightened, religious men; it did not make them demagogues. It made them often, as in the case of Samuel, Elijah, and many more, revolutionists; it never made them traitors. It made them occasionally counsellors of submission to foreign domination; it never made them unpatriotic or cowardly. It made them rigid upholders of the principles of theocratic law; it never made them members of an unscrupulous hierarchy. They formed no caste like the priests. No man was a prophet by birth —only by divine call. They were called like Moses, as he to found, so they to maintain and edify, the house of the Lord; their office being to maintain what he had founded, to realise the theocratic union of love between God and man, to foster and develop the Messianic hope, and actualise the Messianic redemption. Thus they taught the Church,

warned her, counselled her, consoled her; they threatened her, they gave her promises, they foretold her plagues and her blessings. They were, in a word, God's messengers to her, the channels through which every kind of grace in every kind of need was communicated.

From all this we may safely draw the following inferences:

1. As the chief activity of the prophets was directed towards realising the theocratic union of man and God, and as this union is a moral relation, a communion of love within an element of holiness, the prophet himself must have been a holy man. This is scriptural as well as reasonable—"*holy men of God* spake as they were moved." We sometimes fancy we do honour to God when we ascribe great results to feeble instruments. I think you will usually find that God's wisdom is exhibited rather in choosing fitting instruments for His great work, than in doing work with unsuitable instruments. And we do homage to His power somewhat at the expense of His foresight, if we suppose that, having any great work to accomplish, He has not ready at the same time the fitting instrument wherewith to do it. And the holy work of God's kingdom cannot be forwarded by unholy instruments. The prophets were holy men, waiting for the salvation of God, deeply penetrated by the sense of sin, having no hope but in God's mercy, living by faith, and working in the strength of the Lord. And it is a gross perversion of common sense and Scripture to assume, as has sometimes been done, that such men as Caiaphas, or Balaam, or even Saul, are prophetic types. These are the monstrosities of prophecy, proofs, indeed, of what the Spirit of God can do,—even as the dumb ass speaking was another such proof,—but no indication of what the Spirit usually and normally will do.[1]

[1] Cf. the consecration of the prophets, which was a symbol of moral purification: Isa. 6, Jer. 1^5, Ezek. 1^3.

2. As it was holy men who spoke, and as their speaking was directed to holy ends, so their means were holy. The men were moral, their ends were moral (the imparting of the love union of man with God), and the means employed were the usual moral means. A moral nature cannot be influenced by a physical agency. No amount of miracles done before a man's eyes will convert him. The prophets employed the same arguments as we do still; they spoke of sin, and guilt, and wrath; of love, and mercy, and pardon; of a pitying Father, of a yearning and compassionate God, of the past history of the people,—indeed, of all the things preachers speak of still. Their means were moral, rarely miraculous. In other words, prophecy is not identical with *prediction*. Prediction is the least element in it. I do not know that it is an essential element in it at all; though I should hesitate to affirm that it is not, because almost all, if not all, of the prophets in the remains which we possess of their literary activity do give predictions. But prediction was resorted to only on moral grounds, only as a necessary means to shake the people out of their complacency; or oftener to break up in the stormy cloud a rift through which the shining peaceful heaven could be seen beyond,—to console and compose the troubled and trembling heart of the Church in the times of her extremity.

3. Prophecy is thus linked to the history of the Church. This point will need further expansion. But we must remember it now in order to comprehend the nature of prophecy, which arose out of the events and the exigencies of the national life. And it assumed its complexion according to the character of the era and the events which occasioned it. Of course, it was not merely the shadow of the history; it had a vitality and an organic development of its own, and perhaps it conditioned and altered the current of the history with nearly as great frequency as the changes in the history altered the form and the colour of prophecy. The two run

side by side, and follow each other through all the windings of their very devious course. Only we must remember that an agency directed to the realisation of a kingdom of God upon earth must vary with all the phases of the life which it seeks to modify and sanctify. It cannot consist of mere dead utterances of truth, or of unconnected predictions of future events, but must be an historical evolution of truth presented in a living form.

4. A moral being is never a machine. The prophets uttered truths which had taken hold of their own souls, proclaimed hopes which swelled their own hearts, and pointed the eyes of their countrymen to glorious visions of a day, the dawning of which they themselves had already seen. They knew so much of God and of man and of the Creator's designs regarding His creatures, as to speak intelligently of the progress, aye and of the dissolution of their own form of the theocracy. Thus Jeremiah speaks with the utmost emphasis of the passing away of the covenant made with the fathers, and of the establishment of another and very different covenant: "Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt."[1] Thus the prophets were the intelligent depositaries and exponents of the theocratic idea,—which is a twofold thing, —a union of men with God in the person of the Messiah, and a life of men in communion with God in an element of holiness, the one the element of promise in the theocracy, the other the element of law.

This union of man with God, in perfect harmony of mind and heart, is the result of historical action along two lines. Along one of these God descends, and displays Himself, and comes near to men, until He becomes man. Along the other,

[1] Jer. $31^{31.\ 32}$.

man is raised up, and enlightened, and purified, until he is capable of receiving God. These two lines meet one another in Christ, who is God and man; and towards this the revelation and life of the Old Testament was constantly moving. And as this was the goal to be attained at last, so each great movement in the Old Testament history and religion was a step towards it. And not a blind step, but one the meaning of which was felt with a certain consciousness. Of this consciousness the prophets were the recognised interpreters.

Indeed, three specially distinct steps may be observed in God's method of revelation. In the first, He teaches exclusively by acts, with no accompanying word of explanation; but the meaning of the acts could not fail to be perceived by those towards whom He directs them. Thus the call of Abraham embodied in it the divine choice or 'election'; and His bringing him into a new land and a way of life foreign to what he led before, illustrated the truth that life with God involves a break, and must be lived in conditions altogether altered.[1] In like manner the deliverance from Egypt was a true redemption, and the settlement in Canaan a true gift of blessing from God. These things were not the secular movements of a nationality. Neither are they to be considered mere symbols or empty types of future religious benefits. They were themselves actually this. They were the means of a real intercourse with a living God, a giving and receiving from Him; and through them the religious mind was exercised in the very same way as it is even in these days.

Then the second stage advanced one step further. There was still the great divine manifestation in acts of chastisement or mercy, but there usually preceded each of these, or went with it, a word of revelation explaining it. This is the stage of revelation during the epoch of the prophets, who are

[1] Cf. 'Abraham' in *The Called of God*, by Dr. Davidson.

interpreters of God's providences, teaching the people the causes and the meaning of them, giving them insight into their whole national life as it affected mankind, opening up to them the goal of their history, and showing how God's interpositions were leading them onwards to it.

Finally, there comes the third stage in the New Testament, where truth is taught to a certain extent apart from occurrence or event, as principles. These successive steps show us the true relation of the Old Testament to the New. The Old is a preparation for the New, and marks a certain stage of advancement towards it. The remembrance of this fact will enable us to interpret the Old Testament properly, and particularly to understand the apostolic method of using it. There is a double identity, notwithstanding all their difference, between the Old and the New Testaments. There is first the objective identity, the sameness of principles and truths, though in the one case they are not so fully expressed as in the other. And there is the subjective identity of the mind in which the truth resided. To a certain extent the Old Testament writers were conscious that the fulness of the truth they were expressing belonged to the future. But the apostolic writers usually disregard the human authors, and look to the mind of God as containing in it the full truth, and as having this in view, when giving any part of that truth. Hence the New Testament writers feel themselves entitled, when referring to any particular truth, especially Messianic truth, to see in the Old Testament germ of it the whole truth. The whole truth was in the mind of the Revealer; He was bringing it out, though not perhaps at once: and this aspect of it, which He gave at some particular time, carried to their minds the whole.

But there was an objective oneness as well. Any germ carries in it its full attainment. And thus, on two sides, the apostolic exegesis, though not what we call scientific, may be justified. To recognise this relation of the part to the whole is

what Professor Beck called 'to interpret *pneumatically*,' to elevate ourselves up to the mind and intention of the Spirit of revelation, and see His whole wide design even in the fragment which at any time He may be communicating. This is what others call 'interpreting in the light of the end.' This end lies in the New Testament. And it is obvious that no one can interpret Old Testament prophecy aright, who has not observed its perfect development in the New, any more than one who has never seen an oak can estimate aright either the acorn or the sapling.

CHAPTER II.

Prophecy the Dominating Factor in Israel's History from the Time of Moses onwards.

The history of Israel is a history of prophecy. It is, indeed, only in the age of the prophets, who have left writings behind them, that we get details such as enable us to make a picture to ourselves of the real condition of the people's mind and their practical tendencies. We have, it is true, histories of the times preceding the prophetic age, and these afford us occasional glimpses of great interest into the periods with which they deal. But the glimpses are only occasional, and it is oftener a picture of the surface than of the heart of the time that they show us.

The annals of Israel, like the annals of all peoples, are mainly filled with the records of external movements, with struggles against enemies, with heroic deeds of valour performed by individual men, with changes in the outward form of the State and the like. But so far as the religious life of the people is concerned, they hardly touch it at all directly. We are therefore thrown back upon our own resources, and have to translate the external movement into terms of an inner life which we must presuppose; and we have to infer, from the outward restlessness and change, currents of feeling, and a sense of new needs, and a fermentation in the thoughts of the people, which ultimately clarifies and becomes that outward transition from one condition to another which the annals signalise to us as an external fact. But the real history of Israel is a history in which men of prophetic rank and name stand at

the great turning-points of the people's life, and direct the movements. The inner progress of the people was throughout guided by prophets who fertilised the religious life of the nation with new thoughts, or nourished the seeds of truth and the higher aspirations already planted in the heart of the people into fuller growth and fruitfulness; and who, especially in the many crises of the people's history, prepared for each crisis, as, for example, at the destruction of the State, by revealing truths regarding God which enabled the people safely to encounter the storm, and not sink beneath it.

It is the conviction of the prophets and writers of Israel that the line of prophetic teachers has been uninterrupted since the days of Moses. Jeremiah brings Moses and Samuel together: "Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet My mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth."[1] And elsewhere he represents the Lord as saying: "Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them."[2] And the representation of Amos is similar: "I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness; . . . and I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazirites."[3] The Nazirites were a class dating very far back, for in the time of the Judges we find examples of them in Samson and Samuel; and no doubt the prophets existed throughout the whole period of the people's history, though, with the exception of the prophetess Deborah, we read little of them till the time of Samuel.[4]

To say that Israel's history is a history of her prophets is

[1] Jer. 15^{1}. [2] Jer. 7^{25}. [3] Amos 2^{10}.

[4] A distinction, however, must be drawn between the fact of the existence of prophetic men and the name or word 'prophet' (נָבִיא). It is possible that this word is of later origin and usage. This point must be reserved. But the existence of persons all through the history of Israel such as were, at one time at least, called 'prophets' is what must at present be insisted on.

very much the same as saying that it is a history in which the moving and significant agent is Jehovah, the God of Israel, whose mouthpiece and representatives the prophets were: "For the Lord God doeth nothing without revealing His counsel to His servants the prophets; when the Lord God speaketh, who can but prophesy?" [1] In other words, it is a history of revelation, for revelation implies that to certain individuals, and not to the people at large, God makes Himself and His will known; and God makes Himself known in the mind, and not through mere external appliances According to this conception of prophecy, Moses was the first of that goodly fellowship; for though we think of Moses as a lawgiver, yet, as he spoke from God to men, he belongs, whether he spoke laws, or great truths of the kingdom of God, or gave these truths expression and embodiment in institutions, to the class of prophets. And this is the conception which the Old Testament writers entertain of him, and which he is represented as entertaining of himself. As a prophet, he is, like all the other prophets, a servant of the Lord: "My servant Moses, who is faithful in all Mine house." [2] He says of himself: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me." [3] And once more it is said in Hosea: "By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by prophets was he preserved." [4]

Consequently, the history and development of Israel was started by a prophet; and prophets conducted it all along its course, and led it to its issue. The literary or canonical prophets are fully conscious of this. They did not create that ideal of the Israel of God which they seek to see realised; they received it from the past.

It is no doubt the case that some modern scholars consider that the great prophets of the eighth century, such as

[1] Amos $3^{7.8}$.
[2] Num. 12^{7}.
[3] Deut. 18^{15}.
[4] Hos. 12^{13}; cf. Mic. 6^{4}.

Amos and Hosea, are to a greater extent creative minds, and more strictly authors of the pure religious truths which they communicate, than they give themselves credit for being. They are thought not to have been able to distinguish between the sentiments which they saw to be necessary and true, and the sentiments which satisfied a former less advanced age, and passed for truth then. Hence the condemnation which they pronounce on their contemporaries who do not share their high conceptions of God and morals, though no doubt a just condemnation from the point of view of conceptions of religion and ethics true abstractly, was still a condemnation somewhat unjust in reference to their contemporaries, for these contemporaries really held by the old opinions. The chasm between them and the canonical prophets was not produced by their having retrograded, but by the canonical prophets having advanced. To us nowadays such a question has only secondary interest, though it is not without interest. The settlement of it requires a review and an estimate of the history of Israel from the beginning down to the eighth century; and owing to the fact that the history, as we possess it, is mainly external, and to the other fact that it is not contemporary, but written considerably later than the periods which it covers, and may therefore be coloured with sentiments of a more advanced age, such an estimate is very hard to make in a way wholly satisfactory.

Now the Old Testament writers have always a practical end in view: they write for the edification of their contemporaries. Hence when a writer writes history, he is not interested in mere historical accuracy: he is interested in making the history point a moral lesson. Consequently he may to some extent idealise the history, and also throw back into it his own moral convictions which were those of his own day, and very possibly, therefore, an advance upon those of the time about which he is actually writing. So,

when a prophet came to write down his prophecies in a book, perhaps a good number of years after they were first delivered, he did not feel under any obligation to be exact in a literary sense, and reproduce his prophecy precisely as he spoke it years before. He wrote for present edification; and therefore thoughts that may have occurred to him at a later time may be mixed up with his reproduction of the former prophecy. It is also a question which I think is worth considering, whether the modern writers already referred to allow to the historic sense of the prophets the weight to which it is entitled. The prophets certainly consider themselves only links in a chain. They have inherited, as they think, the truths which they desire to conserve and see universally accepted; and it is not lightly to be said, nor without the clearest evidence, that their judgment regarding the past history of their own nation is historically true only to a partial extent. To do so would be to push historical scepticism further than common sense will warrant.

We have some details of the external history of Moses, but little is said of his mental history. It is the manner of the Old Testament to ascribe all that men do immediately to God, He being the real source of all true thoughts and great deeds; and those mental movements which we know to be always present, when God enters into fellowship with men, it passes over. To detect them, we have to read between the lines, to carry back into the times of early history something of our knowledge of how minds work now, when God is moving them. God's revelation of Himself to Moses, and of His purpose to redeem His people, was not made to a mind unprepared or out of sympathy. We know the earlier efforts of Moses in the direction of delivering his people; and we can infer from his act in slaying the Egyptian, and from his remonstrances with his brethren whom he saw quarrelling, what thoughts were filling his mind. We cannot suppose that Moses was a mere mechanical instrument in conveying

laws to Israel from Jehovah, or in embodying great principles of religion and civil order in practical institutions. God uses instruments that are fit. The concurrence of the human mind with Him, in all that He does by its means, is a thing which He always requires, and which may in every case be assumed by us.

It is this concurrence, or the mental range and elevation which enables a man to concur and co-operate with Jehovah, which is the secret of such a man's power over men, and fits him to be the servant of God in leading and teaching them. Moses was no doubt the servant of the Lord in the same sense in which Amos or Hosea or Elijah or Isaiah were His servants; and from reading their writings we know the tension of mind, the high-strung feeling, the play of thought and emotion,—in a word, the absorbing devotion of heart and mind with which they served Him. These were all great minds, but their position in history made them no more than conservators or purifiers of that which they had received; they could at best give a new and happier direction to, or cut a deeper channel for, the current already running. Moses stood higher up. He had, so to speak, to open up the fountain of truth, to create the consciousness which those after him but deepened. And it is with this creative genius that we must credit him. He stamped an impress upon the people of Israel which was never effaced; he planted germs in the consciousness of the nation which even the thicket of thorns that speedily sprang up could not succeed in choking.

No doubt even Moses did not create a nation or a religious consciousness in the sense of making it out of nothing. When he appealed to the people in Egypt in the name of Jehovah their God, he did not conjure with an abstraction or a novelty. The people had some knowledge of Jehovah, some faith in Him; or His name would not have awakened them to religious or national life. In matters like this, we never can get at the beginning. The patriarchal age with its

teaching is not altogether a shadow; otherwise the history of the Exodus would be a riddle. Moses found materials; but he passed a new fire through them, and by its heat welded them into a unity; he breathed a spirit into the people that animated it for all time to come. And this spirit can only have been the spirit that animated himself.

The early history of Israel, the deliverance from Egypt, the unification of the tribes into a nation, their cohesion in the wilderness, their conquest of Canaan, and, above all, their remaining Israelites, and causing the higher moral and religious thought finally to prevail even among the native populations which they absorbed, though these were superior to them in numbers,—all this cannot be conceived except as the work of a powerful personality. Even if the name of Moses had not been transmitted to us, we should have had to postulate some such strong genius as the founder of the Israelite nationality and religion. For in those days it was really the religion—adherence to a particular God, and faith in him—that created the nationality. Moses did not differ in this respect from others; that wherein he differed was in the conception of the God under whose name he created the nation of Israel. In that strange story of his seeing Jehovah in a burning bush, we have no doubt the record of what we may call a religious crisis in the man's own mind. It may not have been sudden, though it came suddenly to a head. For his seeing Jehovah at last was but the climax of a long experience, and was a real vision, as real as Isaiah's vision of Him in the heavenly temple. It is this religious crisis in Moses' own life, with the higher thoughts of Jehovah that accompanied it, which explains his action, and the stamp he was able to impress on Israel's future life.

A vast amount of legislative work is attributed to Moses in the Pentateuch; and in forming an estimate of his significance as a creative power in Israel, we might regard all

this legislation as so much material on which to base our judgment. But in the face of the critical questions that have been raised regarding this legislation, and the critical opinion which asserts that the legislation arose gradually, and marks, like successive milestones, the advance of thought and practice among the people, and by no means forms the starting-point of their development, this would be an unsatisfactory procedure. On the other hand, to assume that the critical theory referred to has beyond question established its case, would be, at least, premature; for however able the theory be in its later developments, and however well, in its broad outlines, it gives a view of the history of the people and their life and religious development which seems to satisfy the requirements of the problem, it is still hampered by difficulties of detail, which it has not yet quite succeeded in overcoming.

After all, however, though these questions do affect our view of the history of the people as a whole, they are mainly concerned with the Levitical legislation, that is, with the minute regulations concerning the Priesthood and the Tabernacle. The great principles of the religion of Israel, that Jehovah is Israel's God, and they His people; that He is a righteous Lord, loving righteousness; that He is a constant presence among the people, speaking clearly, and not in a dark place of the earth secretly; that there is no God like unto Him, forgiving iniquity and passing by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage; that He is to be worshipped as a spirit, though with sacrifice and offering, and by the people appearing before Him; and that what He requires is that men do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly before Him; and that He has a purpose which the future only will disclose, when He shall descend from on high, and tabernacle among men, revealing Himself among them as the Lord their righteousness and God with them,—these truths, and much more, are independent of all critical questions. And that

other question referred to, whether the prophets of the eighth century created, or found, the lofty truths which they teach, is not of much consequence. These truths are taught by them; and whether they be taught by them for the first time, or be several hundreds of years older, can affect us in these days very little.

Therefore I must forbear bringing this legislation into connection with Moses, and look at the general impress which he stamped upon the people at its origin, and the general spirit which he inspired into it. The main features of this impression were two: that Jehovah was Israel's God alone, and that His Being was ethical, demanding a moral life among those who served Him as His people; and these two principles were fused into a high emotional unity in the consciousness of redemption which the people and their leader had just experienced. These principles are, as little as possible, abstract or general. But even these simple principles were given motive power, so to speak, by the historical experience of the people, by the act of their redemption, just as much as any Christian believer begins his life to God with the consciousness of redemption and the forgiveness of his sins through Christ. Jehovah was the only Being to be worshipped, and He was the source of all right and law regulating the people's life. A God who gave as the fundamental law of life the ten commandments, could not but be regarded as Himself absolutely ethical. He could be no nature God, for the promptings of nature are on every hand curbed and circumscribed; He could be no mere reflection of the national spirit, for He stood high above the nation, not involved in it, nor bound by any natural tie to it, but only by a tie of gracious love, having redeemed it: He stood over-against it, laying His commands upon it, commands which, so far from being the expression of its own spirit, it struggled against, more or less, throughout its history.

These two principles, that Jehovah alone is God of Israel,

and that He is a Being altogether above nature, a moral person, are the principles that have possession of the mind of every prophet in Israel. They are principles, of course, around which a hundred questions cluster, *e.g.* whether Jehovah, God alone of Israel, was absolutely the only God, the God of all nations? whether He could be represented or symbolised in images, or some of His attributes, such as His strength, in the form of a bull? On such questions it is manifest that even good men in Israel had confused notions, and only gradually were clear statements regarding them enunciated. And in like manner, while Jehovah was regarded as ethical, men's conceptions of what was moral might become clearer and more inward. The great point was to bring the principles of man's moral life under the protection and authority of Jehovah, so that, practically, as a matter of religious life, the people should know of no God but one. Speculative clearness on such questions would follow in its own time.

No doubt all classes in Israel agreed with the prophets that Jehovah was the particular God of Israel; but a theoretical monotheistic faith cannot have prevailed among the mass of the people. Such a faith, though only informally and indirectly enunciated, evidently prevailed among the prophets from Elijah downwards; but how much older the belief may have been, and how widely it may have been entertained among the people, the very scanty history we possess hardly enables us to determine. Perhaps too much stress may be laid, particularly in early times of simple thought, on an abstract monotheism. What was important was the nature of Jehovah, the closeness of relation to Him which conditioned human life, and the worshipper's feeling that He was his God. Whether other beings, deserving to be called gods, existed and were served by other nations, was really a matter of little moment. Even the polytheism of the heathen sometimes came practically very near monotheism. Worshippers usually devoted themselves to one out

of the many gods known in their country; they usually, therefore, thought of him as God alone, and gradually assigned to him all the distinctive attributes of other deities, and therefore virtually, of deity. Thus one can conceive how particularism, *i.e.* the idea that Jehovah was the particular God of Israel and of the Israelites, may have had in a rude age an educative and religious influence which an abstract monotheism might not have exerted. To it, indeed, may be due that extraordinary sense of the presence of Jehovah in the people's history and the individual's life—that personal intimacy with God—so characteristic of the Old Testament religion.

These two principles, then, that Jehovah alone is God of Israel, and that His nature is moral, along with the memory of the redemption that gave them motive power, may be said to express the higher consciousness of the people,—a consciousness that never died out. The two oldest written documents quoted by Hebrew writers express this consciousness in their very names. One of them is the Book of the Wars of Jehovah. It was the consciousness of Jehovah being their God that made Israel strong in battle. He taught their hands to war; it was His battles that they fought, and the victories which they won were the righteous acts of Jehovah, the righteous acts of His rule in Israel.[1] The other was called the Book of Jashar, the Book of the Upright. That which made Israel's heroes worthy of being commemorated was that they were upright and righteous. And the same two principles appear in all the utterances and in all the acts of the prophets.

In the writing prophets this is evident on every page; but the scattered traditions of an earlier time reveal the same. The remonstrance of Samuel with Saul does not need recalling: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in doing the will of the Lord?

[1] Judg. 5^{11}.

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."[1] The prophet Nathan, by his parable of the ewe-lamb, brought home to David's conscience his great sin in the matter of Uriah the Hittite;[2] and Gad likewise reproved David's pride in numbering the people.[3] It is evident that the policy of Solomon was disapproved by the prophets, his exactions and luxury, and the kind of government, more like a despotism than a free constitutional rule, which he introduced; for one of them, Ahijah of Shiloh, foretold to Jeroboam his elevation to the sovereignty of the ten tribes, even while Solomon was alive.[4] But the same Ahijah denounced the wickedness of Jeroboam, and, when the king's wife went to consult him regarding their sick child — one of the most pathetic stories in the Old Testament—foretold the downfall of his dynasty.[5] In the same way Jehu the son of Hanani rebuked the wicked acts of King Baasha.[6] And it is difficult to know whether the indignation of Elijah was kindled most by the Baal worship of Ahab or by his nefarious murder of Naboth, the Jezreelite. Indeed, it is not easy to say which of the two principles seemed the more important to the prophets, or if either seemed more important than the other. It is probable that the two principles reacted on one another, and that each contributed to elevate and clarify the other. Perhaps speculative clearness on the unity of God, as we observe it in the later prophets, was reached through the lofty conception of His ethical perfection, the feeling that the rule of the world was moral, and that there could be no ruler but one; but it is doubtful if any priority on the side of either principle can be made out.

At any rate the history of Israel, as we read it in the pages of the Old Testament, is the history of a struggle, a conflict in which these two great principles, forming the

[1] 1 Sam. 15^{22}. [2] 2 Sam. 12. [3] 2 Sam. 24.
[4] 1 Kings 11^{29}. [5] 1 Kings 14. [6] 1 Kings 16.

higher consciousness of the people, are seen making strenuous efforts to gain possession of the whole life of the nation and to rule it, efforts which the lower tendencies of the people's mind, their sensuousness both in life and thinking,—a sensuousness ministered to by the seductions of nature, and the baser religious rites of their neighbours around them, —seemed continually to resist. Theoretically, the conflict ended in a victory for the higher, as embodied in the teaching of the prophets, for that teaching has prevailed and been accepted by mankind, and is our cherished inheritance to-day; but practically the lower remained in possession of the field. The people would not convert and be healed, and they had to be cast out; though in this the prophets also found their justification, for that, which they foresaw must be, eventually came about.

Looking down the history of the nation from the Exodus to the Exile, one seems to perceive three turning-points in the struggle, points at which, but for the providential raising up of great prophetic men, the victory might have been on the side of falsehood, as it was among other nations; and the light of an ethical monotheism, and the sense of the presence among men of a living God, their Redeemer, might have been extinguished.

The first of these points is the close of the period of the Judges, marked by the career of the prophet Samuel.

The second is the crisis in the Northern kingdom, caused by the introduction, under Ahab, of the worship of the Zidonian Baal, and the persecution of the worshippers of Jehovah, a point marked by the appearance and zeal of the prophet Elijah.

And the third, which is less easily marked off, is the period of the downfall of the kingdom of Judah, previous to which a strange recrudescence of heathenish practices seems to have occurred, occasioned greatly by the disasters which the State had undergone and the miseries of the people,

which made them turn for help towards the gods of nations stronger than themselves, or which produced in their minds, if they adhered to Jehovah, a sanguinary earnestness in His service, which did not hesitate to offer their firstborn to Him in sacrifice. This period is signalised by the career of Jeremiah, who enabled the people to pass through the shock of the destruction of their nationality and the privations of the Exile, partly by teaching them to look to the future, and to hope for that new covenant which Jehovah's unchanging love to them could not but yet bring in, but mainly by bringing home to the people's hearts the truth that religion was not a thing of nationality, but had its seat in the individual soul; that the dissolution of the nation was not the destruction of religion, and that whether they were in Babylon or in Judea, Jehovah was present, and could be served and loved. This truth had, of course, been taught at all times, but never before with such earnestness and power. It was the truth above all needful for that age. The prominence given to it by Jeremiah not only saved the people of God from despair at the time, but formed the greatest stride which the religion of Israel had made for centuries towards becoming a universal religion.

CHAPTER III.

Prophecy in the Time of Deborah.

The first period of Israel's history is the period of the Judges. The book in which the history of this period is embodied is the Book of Judges, which is made up in the main of two elements, easily separable. Its substance consists of brief histories of six persons called Judges, who arose and delivered the people from their enemies, and of references to six other persons, also called Judges, but of whom little historical knowledge has been preserved. Besides this main substance of the book, there is a framework in which the histories are set. This framework is most clearly seen in chaps. 2^6–3^7, but it also serves as introduction to each of the six histories referred to. It takes the form of a *schema*, in which the same steps are regularly repeated: "The children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and served the Baalim. And they provoked Jehovah to anger, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies. And when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, He raised up a saviour to the children of Israel, who saved them; and the land had rest for so many years." The movement is always the same: fall into idolatry, subjugation by enemies, the cry of distress, and then deliverance; and it is repeated again and again throughout this long period. The framework is later than the histories themselves. It is distinguished by the religious view which it takes of the period, while the individual histories of the Judges are graphic pictures of the prowess and successful

daring of the heroes themselves, rather than histories written for the purpose of religious edification. These histories would be cherished among the tribes to which the individual Judges belonged, and have been gathered together from many sources. They are certainly old; in all likelihood, not later than the beginning of the monarchy: whereas this frame, the work of an editor, is probably nearly as late as the end of the kingdom of Judah.

The question naturally arises, Is this frame, with its regular movement of apostasy, subjugation, penitence, and deliverance, many times repeated, strict history? Probably it is not. It is rather the religious philosophy of the history. It is a summary of the historical movements, written under the idea that Jehovah presided in the history of Israel; and, to bring it down to our own level, we must read second causes into the movements and the operations of the people's mind. The author speaks of Israel as an ideal unity, and attributes to this unity defections which no doubt characterised only fragments of the whole; for a falling away of a whole people to Baal, and then a conversion of it to Jehovah, to be followed by a similar falling away again, twenty or forty years after, is not after the manner of history, or in accordance with the operations of the human mind or heart.

But though we must take heed to the writer's language, and admit that there is a certain amount of the ideal or *schematic* in his representation, there is no doubt that a profound truth underlies his idea that defection from Jehovah was followed by the subjection of the people to their enemies. Unquestionably that which created Israel's self-consciousness was its deliverance from Egypt by Jehovah. That which made it a people was its God; that which made it feel itself a people was its feeling towards Him. The antithesis between it and the nations lay in Him. Therefore, when it fell into the worship of the nations around it or of the tribes within it, which it had absorbed, its self-

consciousness as a people was, so to speak, obscured. That which made it a nation, and was the bond of its unity and the spring of its strength, was broken. Its high idea as a people was lost, and it fell into fragments, and became the prey of the more powerful nations among which it dwelt. Only when its miseries turned its thoughts back to Him who was its strength, and when its consciousness of Him reawakened its consciousness of itself,—in the words of the writer, "when it cried unto Jehovah,"—did its power return; and it was able, in the feeling of Jehovah's presence with it, to resist and vanquish its oppressors.

The whole Book of Judges is instructive in regard to the life and religion of the people at the time; but perhaps chap. 1, chap. 5 (the Song of Deborah), and chaps. 17–18 (the first appendix), are the most instructive parts, and the most helpful to the understanding of the condition of things as they appear in the canonical prophets. Two points are of especial interest in their bearing on these prophets, and in general: first, the political condition of the tribes, and second, their religious state. As to the first, we observe that the high spirit created in the tribes by their redemption from Egypt, which fused them into a unity, and gave them such a sense of invincibility, and enabled them, in their first invasion of Canaan, to overcome the strongest combinations against them, has departed. We are introduced to the generation that succeeded the generation led by Joshua, and the old unity appears almost completely dissolved. The native population was not rooted out of the land. The ideal division of the land by lot under Joshua remained ideal. The Israel which we see in the Judges, and which we read of in the history, and find in the prophets, was not the Israel that came out of Egypt; it was a new and larger nation, that had absorbed into it a vast native population with a civilisation which it partly inherited, with modes of thought with which it could not but become inoculated, and with religious practices which

it could not help in many cases adopting as its own. The Israel of Moses, and the Israel with which history has to deal, are different in quantity, and even more in quality.

Again, we observe a disintegration going on in the unity of the people. As we observe the tribes in Canaan, they are little interested in each other; each of them is settling down in earnest to secure its own footing, and provide for its own preservation. The judges who arise belong to the individual tribes, and rarely secure in their warfare the adhesion of more than two or three of the others. The king of Moab invades Benjamin, and Ehud the Benjamite avenges the wrongs of his tribe; Jephthah leads at most against the children of Ammon the trans-Jordanic tribes; Gideon pursues the Midianites with three hundred men of his own family of Abiezer.

But notwithstanding that there is no real union of the tribes, the nearest approach to it being secured by Deborah, there is an ideal unity. Even when a single tribe acts, or when a judge delivers a single tribe, the history speaks of him as saving 'Israel.' And it is not only in the prose part that this mode of speech prevails, in which it might be due to later conceptions, and to a point of view taken after the rise of the kingdom; the same manner of speaking appears in the Song of Deborah:

"For that the chieftains came forward in Israel,
For that the people offered themselves willingly,
Bless ye Jehovah.[1]

. . . . . .

My heart is toward the governors of Israel,
That offered themselves willingly among the people,
Bless ye Jehovah.[2]

. . . . . .

[1] Judg. 5^2. [2] Judg. 5^9.

Was there a shield or spear seen
Among forty thousand in Israel?[1]

. . . . .

The rulers ceased in Israel, they ceased,
Until that I Deborah arose,
That I arose a mother in Israel."[2]

In spite of actual disintegration, the conception of an Israel forming a unity, the people of Jehovah,[3] everywhere appears. In one remarkable point, extremely significant in regard to subsequent history, there appears a breach in the unity. The term Israel appears to be applied to the tribes north of Benjamin. Judah is not referred to in Deborah's song. While she satirises the other tribes that failed to take part in the struggle, she has no word of blame for the powerful Southern tribe. Apparently Judah was not expected to join the confederation.

In short, we observe already in this early time that political fracture which afterwards widened into the two separate kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The two powerful tribes, Ephraim and Judah, had already begun to pursue each its own course; and the smaller tribes were attracted round Ephraim, which early aspired to the leadership, as we observe from its interference in the struggles carried on both by Gideon and Jephthah. On the other hand, Judah with a poorer soil and less powerful neighbours, except on the Philistine border, seems to have detached itself early from the other tribes, and devoted itself to its own occupations. This tribe also, as well as the others, absorbed into itself a large amount of foreign blood, *e.g.* the Kenites. But there is this great difference. The elements absorbed by Ephraim and the Northern tribes were the native Canaanites, with their debased worship, in which even immorality was an element; but the tribes that entered into

[1] Judg. 5^{8}. [2] Judg. 5^{7}. [3] Judg. 5^{11}.

Judah were nomadic Arabs, whose morals were purer and whose religion and worship were more elevated. It is even argued by some writers that it was to the Kenites—to whom Moses' father-in-law belonged—that the Israelites owed their conception of Jehovah and even His name. At any rate, we can see how Judah in great measure escaped the moral taint with which familiarity with the Baal worship infected Israel.

Apart from the frame, very little appears in the narratives to cast light on the religious condition of the people. The central sanctuary was no doubt at Shiloh, though it is mentioned only once in the narrative as a place where a yearly dance of young maidens took place,—presumably in connection with some of the yearly feasts. The narrative in chap. 1, detailing the intermixture of Israel with the native inhabitants, and, in spite of the ideal unity, the practical isolation of the individual tribes, suggests that the same process of disintegration, which went on in the political sphere, manifested itself also in the sphere of religion. The individual tribes probably provided each for itself its religious institutions. They adopted the places of worship already existing among the Canaanites. Both Deuteronomy and Ezekiel suggest that the high places were original Canaanitish shrines. In Deut. 12^{2} we read: "Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree. And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break down their pillars, and burn their Asheras with fire." In Ezek. 20^{27}: "Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed Me . . . for when I had brought them into the land which I had sworn to give them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering. . . . Then said I, What is the high place (Bamah) whereto ye go? And the name

thereof is called Bamah unto this day." The syncretism would not stop with the adoption of the places of worship; many also of the religious practices would be adopted into the service of Jehovah, for Canaanites and Israelites worshipped at the same altar. Here and there where the two peoples coalesced by intermarriage, or where the aborigines outnumbered the Israelites, and the lines of distinction became effaced, the worship of Baal and the Astartes would entirely supersede the worship of Jehovah. And even where it did not, it is probable that, as there were images in the Canaanitish temples on the high places, these would be imitated, and the same or similar figures taken to represent Jehovah. The author of the 'frame' speaks very generally, saying that the people worshipped the Baals and the Astartes. We have difficulty in correctly interpreting this. The Baals became a general phrase to express not only the actual Baals, but also the images of Jehovah, and even the heathenish mode of sacrificing to Jehovah with riotous revelry. Already this meaning appears in Hosea.

It is, in fact, the conviction of all the prophets that a fatal deterioration of the people took place after their entrance into Canaan. Jeremiah represents Jehovah as thus addressing the people of his own time: "What evil did your fathers find in Me, that they went far away from Me? I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled My land, and made Mine inheritance an abomination."[1]

Some explanation of this degeneration must, of course, be sought. Probably we shall not be far wrong in representing the state of things to ourselves somewhat as follows: The Israelites did not pass over to the acknowledgment of the Baals or the Astartes as deities distinct from Jehovah. It was Jehovah whom they consciously served; but, worshipping Him along with Canaanites and at the same shrines,

[1] Jer. 2^5.

they may have adopted the same forms and practices of worship as the Canaanites, and thus gradually the characteristic qualities of Baal might be assigned to Jehovah, or at least the strict distinction in idea between them might cease to be felt. This would be particularly the case with the absorbed Canaanites, who, if they worshipped Jehovah, seeing He had now taken possession of the land, would assign to Him the attributes they had formerly assigned to Baal and their native deities. This syncretism or amalgamation of the two religions would become specially manifest in the second generation, the descendants of Israelites intermarrying with Canaanites. Of course this would not be universal. And the history expressly states that the religious corruption did not begin till the death of Joshua, or rather till the disappearance of the generation whom he led into Canaan. It was in the next generation and onwards that the syncretism of the Baal and the Jehovah religions appeared through the importation of Baal elements into the worship of Jehovah.

Yet in spite of all this tendency to decline in the religious life of the people, we observe, just as in the political sphere, that the ideal unity was still preserved. Jehovah was the God of Israel. However mean and unworthy the people's conceptions of Him were, it was He to whom the people belonged. It was to Jehovah that Jephthah made his fatal vow,—he spake all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh. It was to Jehovah that Gideon dedicated the spoils taken from the Midianites; and out of these he framed a molten image, no doubt of Jehovah, which he set up in his house. It was to Jehovah that the mother of Micah dedicated the eleven hundred pieces of silver, out of which her son made a molten image, which ultimately the marauding Danites stole and set up in Dan,—another forestalment in this early age of subsequent proceedings. But it is in the Song of Deborah that the ideal unity of the worship and the higher conceptions of Jehovah appear most clearly. If we had a

few more poems by prophetic minds such as this, and not the external histories of rude soldiers, such as unfortunately we possess alone, we should, I believe, be able to form a higher idea even of the religious condition of the people under the Judges. It is Deborah who says:

"I, even I, will sing unto Jehovah,
I will sing praise to Jehovah, the God of Israel."[1]

It is Jehovah who fights Israel's battles:

"They shall rehearse the righteous acts of Jehovah,
The righteous acts of His rule in Israel;
Then the people of Jehovah went down to the gates."[2]

The angel of Jehovah, that is, himself in his personal presence, leads Israel's armies, and pursues his foes. Hence we read:

"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of Jehovah,
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;
Because they came not to the help of Jehovah,
To the help of Jehovah among the mighty."[3]

When we remember that Jephthah sacrificed his daughter, and that even Gideon set up a molten image to Jehovah, we might suppose that the conceptions formed of Jehovah were not very elevated. Yet, in the Song, we observe Him regarded as ruling in heaven and on earth, commanding the stars in their courses, and the rivers as they flow:

"They fought from heaven;
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
The river Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon."[4]

But strong as is the faith in Jehovah's power which this

[1] Judg. 5^3. [2] Judg. 5^{11}. [3] Judg. 5^{23}. [4] Judg. $5^{20.\ 21}$.

song manifests, the loftiest and most touching thought in it is that which the last stanza contains:

> "But let them that *love* Him
> Be as the sun going forth in his might."[1]

The period of the Judges, rightly understood, supplies the key to the religious history of Israel. A new nation was in process of being formed, a nation that had to assimilate the mass of the Canaanites with their thought and principles. Their religion as well as their morals entered, during this period, into the life of Israel; and just because the Canaanites themselves became Israelites, did the Mosaic religion require ages to assimilate these alien elements, and permeate the whole nation with its own higher principles. Hence this period is the creative epoch of historical Israel,—the workshop in which the nation, as we know it, was fashioned. In the Book of Judges we are shown the origin of that complication which the canonical prophets have to unravel; the knot is being tied which they require all their efforts to unloose. The higher spirit and faith of the nation has presented for its assimilation a mass of lower conceptions which it is unable at once to overcome and dominate. Yet it does not allow itself to lose courage. It is assured of final victory.

[1] Judg. 5^{31}.

CHAPTER IV.

Prophecy in the Time of Samuel and Saul.

When we read the prophets and observe that their conflict against the people's thought and practice is invariably carried on along two great lines,—first, along the line of Jehovah's sole Godhead, and secondly, along the line of His spirituality and ethical nature,—we are apt to think that the Israel of the Exodus must have stood on a very low level, since even in the prophetic age it presents the aspect which it does. But as soon as we call to mind the mass of heathenish materials which the nation absorbed in taking possession of Caanan, we are better able to understand the course of development and the protracted struggle of the prophets The consciousness of unity in Israel, whether political or religious, unquestionably ran a great risk, during the time of the Judges, of being overcome by the elements making for disintegration. This crisis was met by Samuel, who gave the needful direction to the higher elements in the nation.

Our review of the period of the Judges showed that while the Israel of that age had not lost the ideals of an earlier period, it had fallen far short of realising them. The ideal unity of the tribes as one Israel remained, though practically the unity had become disintegrated. The conception that all the tribes had one God, Jehovah, who gave them unity, and to whom alone allegiance was due, still ruled the higher minds; but in practice the scattered population in many places fell into the habit of worshipping the gods of the natives among whom they had settled, and with whom

they were coalescing into a single people. More frequent than this defection to the worship of the native gods would be the natural syncretism which united Jehovah and such gods in one worship, at a common sanctuary, and with a ritual assimilated in many ways to the native ritual, or at least borrowing much from it.

In fact, the result of our survey was to show that a new Israel was thus arising, larger in bulk, and containing not only very mixed elements of population, but necessarily also masses of people devoted to lower religious practices and living on a lower plane of morals; and that in this way the higher religious and moral spirit in Israel had presented to it the task of penetrating and animating a mass of thought very dissimilar to itself. Hence a conflict arose between the higher and the lower, which raged more or less throughout all the history of Israel. It is in the pages of the canonical prophets where we see this conflict in all its meaning; and these prophets cannot be at all understood, unless we carry with us, to the reading of them, this preliminary consideration of the earlier period.

We come now to the period which succeeded that of the Judges, and this is a period of surpassing importance. It, too, is a new and creative epoch. If in the preceding age processes were going on which enlarged and complicated the problems set before the higher religious spirits of Israel for solution, this period gave birth to forces which, if not new, were new combinations of influences already operative, and which became the most important factors in the religious life and history of Israel. Just as, in some of the higher mountainous regions of our country, one sees a number of springs breaking out within a small area, which pour themselves down the precipices into the ravine below, and unite to form what becomes ere long an imposing river which broadens with every league of its progress, so in this region of history we observe springs rising, which speedily unite to form the

great stream of religious life and thought which flows down the whole history of the people of Israel. Two of the most significant of these are the prophetic order and the theocratic kingship.

The fact that Amos couples together the prophets and the Nazirites as equally raised up by Jehovah, may be taken to indicate a connection both in origin and in action between the two classes. The Nazirite vow was one of more perfect dedication to Jehovah than was common in ordinary life. This dedication, however, was designed to show itself more in the sphere of personal than of public life, the Nazirite life being in a certain measure ascetic. Still it is evident that both the Nazirite vow and the rise of prophets point to an increasing religious fervour, and to a new power which the spiritual side of the Jehovah religion was beginning to put forth. Samuel was both a Nazirite and a prophet. The spirit of Naziritism no doubt sometimes took singular forms, as in the case of Samson; and we might almost think that the religious element failed in his history. Yet even in his case we may perceive the influence of spiritual conceptions, as, for example, how dedication to Jehovah implies, or rather creates, a spiritual self-command which ought to be able to resist and abstain from all that is voluptuous, or tends to overmaster men's spirit, or rob it of its freedom and power; and, secondly, how this dedication to Jehovah is the source of supernatural strength; and finally, how any breach of the dedication, or forgetfulness of it, entails the loss of the gifts, although not altogether their extinction, inasmuch as the germ of them remains, and they show themselves anew, though perhaps only fitfully and in the expiring struggles of the Nazirite. In this respect there is a singular analogy between the history of Samson and that of Saul.

When we come to the time of Samuel himself, we find this growing zeal for Jehovah's service very marked. There is frequent mention of prophets, and they appear to have

existed in great numbers. Of the childhood of Samuel, indeed, we read that "the word of the Lord was rare in those days; vision was not widely spread";[1] but the class of those called prophets was numerous, and it continued to be so down even to the destruction of Jerusalem. There is much difference of opinion among writers on several points connected with these prophets, and much might be said. I will state under a few heads what seems in the main capable of verification.

Those commonly called 'prophets' in this age formed communities,—they were cœnobites. Probably the name Naioth[2] in Ramah, meaning 'dwellings,' describes such a colony or settlement of prophets. A number of places are mentioned as the residences of these prophets, *e.g.* Ramah,[3] in Mount Ephraim, where Samuel himself dwelt; Bethel, in the same neighbourhood;[4] Gibeah, in Benjamin;[5] Jericho, on the Jordan;[6] and Gilgal, likewise near the Jordan.[7] Now it is known that at all these centres there was a high place, *i.e.* a local sanctuary, where Jehovah was worshipped. It may therefore be fairly surmised that it was around these houses of Jehovah that the prophets of this time settled.

It is probable that, as the prophets dwelt near the sanctuaries, they would be in close connection with the priests. From the history of Saul we learn that they practised music. Samuel says to Saul, when he dismissed him to his home after announcing his elevation to the throne in Israel, "It shall come to pass that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them; and they shall be prophesying. And the spirit of Jehovah will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them."[8] The term 'prophesy' here undoubtedly describes the demeanour of these prophets as they proceeded, and the exercises in which

[1] 1 Sam. 3^{1}.
[2] 1 Sam. $19^{19.\ 22.\ 23}$ 20^{1}.
[3] 1 Sam. 19^{18}.
[4] 2 Kings 2^{3}.
[5] 1 Sam. $10^{5.\ 10}$.
[6] 2 Kings 2^{5}.
[7] 2 Kings 4^{38}.
[8] 1 Sam. 10^{5}.

they were engaged. These probably consisted of singing, or other expressions of religious thoughts, accompanied with much fervour or even excitation of manner. The excitation was infectious, though this appears less from this passage than from another,[1] where it is stated that Saul, when he went to Naioth to take David, was seized by the prophetic spirit, and he stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. These facts perhaps justify the conclusion that there was not yet that sharp distinction between the prophets and the priests that arose later, and that as yet the prophets attached themselves somewhat closely to the various sanctuaries throughout the country, because at these the living worship and knowledge of Jehovah was to be found. Indeed, the connection of the prophetic body with the priests was always close. It is not improbable that Joel was a priest, but at all events the two great prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, came out of priestly families. And those prophets whom Jeremiah denounces as false are in close connection with the temple and the priests. Pashhur, who put Jeremiah in the stocks, was both a priest and a prophet;[2] and it was 'the priests and the prophets' who had Jeremiah arrested and arraigned before the princes because he prophesied the destruction of the temple.[3]

The multiplication of prophets at the epoch of Samuel indicates a rising spirit of devotion to Jehovah and enthusiasm in His service, and naturally those enthusiasts are found clustering round the sanctuaries where He was worshipped. The question rises, To what was this greater fervour and religious elevation due? Many have explained it as due to the circumstances of the people at the time. The people were suffering from an oppression far more severe than any that had yet overtaken them. They were completely enslaved by the Philistines. And it is argued that this oppres-

[1] 1 Sam. $19^{23.\ 24}$. [2] Jer. 20. [3] Jer. 26.

sion called forth a new national spirit. Of course in Israel national and religious were identical terms. The idea of later prophets, that national autonomy might be lost, while the religion of Jehovah remained, had not yet been reached. It was Jehovah that redeemed Israel and made it a nation; and national sentiment could not but take the form of a fervid return and adherence to Jehovah. Israel's enemies were the enemies of Jehovah; and only by the help of Jehovah, their God, could Israel throw off the yoke of the oppressor. It is very probable that there is some truth in this idea, though it must be confessed that the prophetic communities are never brought into any connection with the enemies of Israel or with national efforts to deliver the country.

Others have supposed that the new uprising of religious zeal was due to the influence of Samuel, and that the origin of the prophetic communities must be attributed to him. There is no evidence, however, that Samuel originated the prophetic communities. The history of Samuel himself is told us in a fragmentary way. We find him first dedicated by his mother to the Lord and placed under the priests at Shiloh; and there Jehovah began to speak to him, as He did to the canonical prophets, directly. Afterwards we find him at Ramah, enjoying the reputation of being, as it was then called, a *seer*, which the writer tells us was what in later times was usually named a *prophet;* but we do not know the circumstances that led to his departure from Shiloh.[1] Though Samuel sacrificed just as Elijah did, he does not appear ever to have been strictly a priest. The prophetic *rôle* which he was so early called to play, appears to have been that accepted by him, and to have led to his abandoning Shiloh, and, in virtue of his rank as a seer, taking the place of judge in Israel. All that we have history for is that Samuel was

[1] We learn from Jeremiah that the house of the Lord at Shiloh was at some time or other utterly destroyed, and it is possible that the destruction occurred at this period at the hands of the Philistines.

in close relation with the prophetic communities, for we see him at their head[1] on the occasion referred to when Saul sent to take David. But he did not ordinarily reside among them, for it is said of David that when he escaped to him at Ramah, he and Samuel went and dwelt at Naioth, the residence of the prophets.[2]

Samuel's relation to the prophetic schools is precisely the same as that of Elijah and Elisha to them at a later date. It is manifest that the school at Naioth looked up to him as a higher authority and took directions from him, and that he occasionally took part in their prophetic exercises; but it is equally evident that his gift or function as a seer was of a different character from theirs, precisely as the function of Elijah differed from that of the prophetic schools of his day. It is therefore probable that both the prophetic gift of Samuel, and the new enthusiasm of those called prophets, were alike symptoms of a new impulse, but that the one was hardly the cause of the other. It is probable, no doubt, that there were in the circumstances of the people at the time causes which, if we knew them, might help to explain the rising tide of religious enthusiasm. Jehovah works through second causes, but the Scripture historian usually omits these; and all the information which he gives us is that Jehovah spake to Samuel in Shiloh; and afterwards we hear of him under the name of 'the seer.' The facts given us in the history of Samuel hardly suffice to account to us for the renown which he acquired in the mind of his people and the later references made to him. The historian has given us a beautiful history of his birth and childhood,[3] but he suddenly breaks off, and when we meet the prophet again he is already an old man, and his history is merely that of one who participates in the events connected with Saul and David. These things make it extremely probable that Samuel had a history which, if we knew it, would explain the great reputation

[1] 1 Sam. 19. [2] 1 Sam. 19^{18}. [3] 1 Sam. 1–3.

which later literature shows he had. Jeremiah couples him with Moses; and possibly there belongs to him an honour nothing short of being the second founder of the religion of Jehovah.

Now there are just two or three other steps in the history of the prophets to which reference may here be made. In the ages following Samuel the prophets are much spoken of. The impression which the history leaves on us is that Samuel, though called a 'seer,' was entirely what in the times of the canonical prophets was called a 'prophet,' and this is the impression of the writer, who says: "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a prophet was beforetime called a seer."[1] The point of importance is this, that men went to inquire of God at Samuel, though called a seer. Now there is no doubt that this was extraordinary in Samuel's day. Formerly, and even later, the priest was in possession of the oracle of Jehovah; and it was through this priestly oracle, the Urim and Tummim, that God gave responses to those who inquired of Him. In the early history of David we observe him frequently inquiring of God through the priests. And we see the same in the case of Gideon, who set up an oracle—an Ephod—in his house. This appears to have been the legitimate channel through which the decisions of Jehovah came to men. No doubt these decisions were in many instances judicial, decisions on difficult cases between man and man; but in David's case they were of the nature of oracles as to conduct. Even before Samuel, as in the case of Deborah, the divine counsel might be given through a person; but from Samuel onward this appears to have become almost regular. This was a great stride, so to speak, and an epoch in the history of prophecy. The priestly oracle was a species of lot,—not quite understood by us. Now Jehovah began to speak directly

[1] 1 Sam. 9^9.

and exclusively to the minds of men,—He revealed His secret counsel to His servants the prophets. The consistency and exclusiveness of this mode of revelation was the foundation of the prophetic order, which, as we usually speak of it, we may therefore date from Samuel.

Another step of importance followed. In the time of the early monarchy we read of a number of men who are called prophets; but special designations are given to some of them, suggestive of a particular relation which they bore to the kings, *e.g.* 2 Sam. 24^{11}, the 'prophet' Gad is called David's 'seer.' In 1 Chron. 25^{5} the sons of Heman, the king's seer, are mentioned. From this we infer that those prophets, who have both names, prophet and seer, stood in a close relation to the king, being, as what we call prophets, his counsellors, and addressing him in the name of God. These prophets, therefore, indirectly influenced the government as a whole, and acted upon the affairs of the kingdom of God, although through the king. So long as the kings and prophets were in accord, this may have worked well. But when wicked or untheocratic-minded kings arose, naturally the king and the prophets, at least those who were the true prophets of Jehovah, took different sides. It might have been well for the peaceable development of the theocracy if the prophets and the rulers had always been in accord; and we might think it a calamity when a dissidence arose between them. But undoubtedly though the disagreement was occasionally fruitful of trouble and revolution, it was an event which we may call fortunate in the history of prophecy. It achieved the complete independence of the prophetic order. The prophets took their place as the immediate servants of Jehovah over-against all other classes. The religious and moral development of the nation fell exclusively into their hands. The priests sank into mere officiating functionaries in the sanctuaries, whose chief care was to attend to ritual, although they still had in their

hands, for a time at least, judicial power in all ordinary matters, civil as well as religious.

Finally, another step was taken. Samuel and the great prophets Elijah and Elisha interfered directly in the government of the State; the former because in his day there was no king, and the latter because the kingship had become corrupt, and threatened, as in the case of Ahab, to destroy the fundamental principles of the constitution. But from Elisha downwards the prophets withdraw, in the main, from party strife. They no longer head revolutions. It began to appear to them that the State, as such, was hopelessly corrupt and must be destroyed; and so their interest in one king as against another ceases. They fall back entirely on moral means. They address the people as a whole. Such men as Isaiah and Jeremiah still give counsel to kings, but they never head political movements, or ally themselves with parties. From Amos downwards the prophets employ exclusively speech and writing.

CHAPTER V.

Prophecy in the Time of David.

In the time of the Judges there are to be observed two or three political tendencies beginning to show themselves, which in later times became more prominent, and indeed ruled the political conditions of the nation to the end. One of these was the claim of the tribe of Ephraim, which occupied the centre of gravity of the country, to a Hegemony, or at least to a preponderating influence at any rate among the Northern tribes. This powerful clan acted on the surrounding tribes with the attraction of a large mass for smaller bodies, and became the centre around which the other tribes clustered or revolved. Secondly, this union of the Northern tribes on both sides of the Jordan was counterbalanced in the South by the powerful tribe of Judah; and this early fracture widened ultimately into the great schism between the North and the South.

A third thing noticeable is an occasional attempt to introduce the kingly form of government. No doubt the need of a more permanent authority than that supplied by the individual judges was widely felt. The judges were dictators of a kind, but their appearance was only occasional. They were raised up to meet a special emergency. It is probable that during their lifetime they occupied a place of authority and respect,—having saved Israel during war, they continued to judge, that is, administer justice during the time of peace. Yet when they died the nation was again without a head and without visible unity. Jehovah

was the King, but His rule was invisible and ideal. It might be real enough, and felt by the better minds in the State, but the ruder masses felt the need of something that appealed to their senses. There seems to have been, however, among the higher minds a feeling that a human king would compete with the kingship of Jehovah. Gideon, when pressed to assume royal authority, declined; and the same feeling was afterwards manifested by Samuel, though probably the urgent needs of his time helped to overcome his scruples. A kingdom was set up for awhile by Abimelech, the son of Gideon, though its duration was probably but for a few years, and its extent, perhaps, not greatly larger than the city of Shechem and its territories. It is to be supposed that the absorption into the individual tribes of the masses of the aboriginal inhabitants may have somewhat tended to efface the great tribal distinctions, and to have prepared the way for a monarchy over all the tribes without distinction.

The rise of the kingdom in Israel, and the causes and manner of the election of the first king, are involved in some obscurity. As has been pointed out, the need of some visible head to represent the people, of a leader under whose banner they might rally in times of danger, had been often felt. During the lifetime of each judge the unity of the people was in some measure attained and conserved. But whenever he died the former state of disintegration supervened, since, as the historian occasionally remarks, "there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes." As long as the conflicts which the tribes had to wage were not more formidable than quarrels between them and the native populations or marauding bands from the desert beyond Jordan, such a condition, though dangerous, might not be intolerable; but when an organised power, like the Philistine confederacy, initiated what was a war of conquest against the Northern tribes, the need of a king

to lead the armies of Israel and resist the aggressor was universally felt. And in point of fact it was in connection with the Philistine wars that the kingship originated. In 1 Sam. 4–6 is narrated the disastrous defeat of Israel at Ebenezer by the Philistines, which resulted in the death of Eli's two sons, the capture of the ark, and the subjugation of Northern Israel. Immediately on this follows, in chaps. 8–13, the history of Saul's election to the throne, and his great exploit in defeating the Ammonites, who were besieging Jabesh Gilead, which in the eyes of the nation justified the choice that had fallen on him.[1]

It seems almost certain that 1 Samuel contains two narratives of the election of Saul, written from somewhat different points of view, but now amalgamated together. The first of these narratives is contained in chap. 8, 10^{17-27}, and chap. 12. Chap. 11, though now embodied in this narrative, probably belonged originally to another. The second narrative is contained in $9^{1-10.\ 16}$, chaps. 13, 14, and it is probable that chap. 11 originally formed part of it. It does not appear to me that these narratives contradict one another, though unquestionably they give prominence to different aspects of the transaction. The former enters more into the state of the people's mind in asking a king of Samuel, and represents Samuel as at first opposed to the request. The people are represented as seeking a king, that they might be as the nations about them. And to the prophet the request seems a renunciation of the kingship over them of Jehovah, —as indeed the voice of heaven says to him: "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me."

The second narrative is without this deeper religious insight, and moves more among external facts. It is prefaced by the story of Saul seeking the lost asses, an adventure which brings him before Samuel. By a preceding inspiration, the prophet is warned that this is the man whom

[1] 1 Sam. 11.

the Lord has chosen to be ruler of His people; he anoints the young hero, and sends him away, foretelling some remarkable religious experiences which would befall him, when the Spirit of God would come on him, and he would be changed into another man. The higher spirit animated Saul; and a month later, when the people of Jabesh Gilead sent messengers imploring help against the Ammonites, Saul hews his oxen in pieces, and sends the bloody fragments throughout Israel, like one of the old judges, commanding the people to follow him. His brilliant victory over the Ammonites secured him universal recognition, and he is crowned king amidst the acclamations of the people.

Now there does not seem any great divergence here. That very mixed motives should animate the people in seeking a king, is natural enough; and the request did reveal a want of faith in the protection of their God. And that minds like Samuel's should cling to the ancient *régime*, and be loath to see the ideal sovereignty of Jehovah, which should have been powerful enough to secure the unity of the tribes, brought down and embodied in an earthly monarchy, is not wonderful. In periods of transition the old ideal becomes encircled with a halo of glory, and it is not without regret that it is given up, even when new necessities have arisen that imperatively demand a change. Both narratives concur in tracing the new movement to Samuel ultimately. The kingdom has the sanction of prophecy and the prophet of Jehovah, and through him of Jehovah Himself. In the one narrative Jehovah selects Saul, and anoints him king (so Sept.) through His prophet Samuel; in the other, Jehovah intimates His will through the sacred lot. In other words, in the one narrative the sovereignty is the creation of the prophetic inspiration; in the other, of the priestly inspiration or guidance by Jehovah.

It does not belong to our subject to trace the history of Saul or other individual rulers. Old Testament prophecy

does not deal with the history as history, but with it only as it has religious significance, and reveals the progress of thought in Israel. The history of Saul is familiar in its great turning-points, which are mainly three: the heroic struggle of the king and his chivalrous son Jonathan against the Philistines; the campaign against Amalek, which had as its issue the rejection of Saul from the throne; and the last tragic events of his life, his desertion by Jehovah, his consulting the witch of Endor, and the disastrous defeat of Israel by the Philistines at Gilboa, in which he and his sons fell. The question which has to be put is, What is the significance, in the religion of Israel, of the theocratic kingdom? It is evident that Saul did not realise the ideal of that kingdom; for, because he did not, he was rejected from it. It is not till the reign of his successor that characteristics appear, and events are transacted, that suggest to us what the ideal of a king for Jehovah, and a kingdom of the Lord upon earth is. These characteristics and events enter into the religious imagination of the people, and become powerful impulses for the present, and brilliant ideal anticipations for the future.

Yet there are incidents in the life of Saul, and a tragic element running through it, which induce us to linger over the page of history on which it is written. The question, What was the cause of Saul's failure? what was the feature wanting in him which caused his rejection? or what was the cause of the rupture between him and the prophet, which made the latter, with lifelong grief, withdraw from him, is difficult to answer.[1] So far as an answer is furnished, it is given in chap. 15, which narrates the campaign against Amalek. The king disobeyed some particulars of the commands Jehovah laid on him, and for this reason he was rejected. The reasons seem to us insufficient. And doubtless there were more

[1] Cf. 'The Reprobation of Saul' in Dr. Davidson's volume of Sermons entitled *The Called of God*.

reasons, though they may have been of a similar kind. It was not one act of Saul's, but a prevailing disposition or type of mind, that caused his rejection. Cardinal Newman, in a sermon on the subject, concludes that self-will was the sin of Saul. But self-will is only another side of insufficient sensibility to the will of another. And this is the view of the narrative. The new kingship was the representative of Jehovah's rule; and, to be so, it must be modelled in all things after His will. This will was expressed through prophecy, the living source of revelation. And it was just in the case of the first king that the subordination of his will to that of the true King had to be insisted on. But the king was rather one that corresponded with the secular wishes of the people in demanding a king, than one after Jehovah's own heart. In truth, Saul's election and reprobation only illustrate the general truth, seen in the case of Abraham's children and Isaac's, that God's first experiment is one on the field of nature, and that, when the failure of this is palpable, He substitutes for it one on the field of grace.

If, then, we seek to estimate the kingship in its religious meaning, the reign of David furnishes the most important point of departure. For there was the personality of David,—he was a man after God's heart. This does not refer to his moral life, which was far from immaculate, but rather, as we might say, to his religious life. His public religious acts and his submission to the revelation of Jehovah explain the expression.

By a series of successful wars, David not only defeated the Philistines, who had for a long time been almost suzerains of Israel, but extended his conquests on the other side of Jordan, from the south end of the Dead Sea as far north as Damascus. Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the Syrian States came successively under his sway. The country between the Jordan and the Euphrates virtually

belonged to him. Israel was a powerful State, almost what in those days might have been called an empire. The youth who had risen from the sheep-cotes to the throne of Israel was the most brilliant conqueror of his time; and the memory of his deeds and of the renown he won for his people was never effaced. Rather, as men looked back to it in after ages, when the kingdom had long been divided, and great reverses had fallen on both halves of it, and it was tottering to its fall both in the North and the South, the halo of light that encircled the Davidic age became brighter.

As usually happens, the dark spots in the king's reign and life were not noticed amidst the blaze of splendour that hung over the whole,—the bloodshed, the family intrigues and assassinations, and the personal failings of the monarch himself: what was seen was the extent of his rule, the national unity which he consolidated, the peace which he secured, and his zeal for Jehovah, God of Israel. And we must allow that this judgment was just. For though the king had failings, just as in a face some one feature that is defective is lost sight of in the harmony and beauty of all the features, so in his character that which was evil was not noticed in the general greatness and nobility of the whole.

David was a man of strong impulses not always controlled, but also of a most tender sensibility; and if his passions led him into great sins, the depth of his nature was shown in the agony of his compunction. His love for Jonathan, his paroxysms of sorrow over his little child and his son Absalom, reveal the emotional and impulsive type of his nature. His predecessor Saul was stately, proud, and kingly in person and mind, but reserved, and without the spell of sympathy which attaches men and inspires them with a personal affection, his relative Abner and his devoted son Jonathan being almost the only friends of his mentioned; but David's nature flowed out and mixed itself with the minds of men around him, and they loved him with an

affection which, as he said himself, passed the love of women. The roll of his heroes, and the hazardous exploits they were ready to do for him on all occasions, amply attest his irresistible influence over them. His history and his character fitted him to be a nation's hero, and the historian remarks, when narrating his generous indignation at the murder of Abner, and how he followed his bier to the grave,—though policy might have congratulated itself on the great supporter of the house of Saul being removed out of the way,—that whatsoever the king did pleased the people.

Several things suggest that the true theocratic party in Israel had, at a very early period of Saul's reign, transferred its hopes from that king and bestowed them on David. The priests at Nob favoured the latter, and brought on themselves the exterminating vengeance of Saul. Not only priests but prophets are mentioned as accompanying David in his flight and exile. So soon as David became king, this party, represented by men like Gad and Nathan, attached themselves to his court. Now sacred history places everything under a supernatural light, and informs us that Samuel, at God's command, anointed David to be king. The historian's object is to show how God guided the history, not to tell how men's minds moved or co-operated. We have therefore always to read between the lines in such narratives, and fancy to ourselves motives influencing men, and movements among them operating for a considerable time, and culminating at last in such an act as that of Samuel.

David justified the hopes of the theocratic party in Israel. His first care, when he established his throne at Jerusalem, was for the ark of Jehovah. After the battle of Aphek, the ark, having fallen into the hands of the Philistines, was sent back by them, and remained for a long time in the care of private persons, no religious services being connected with it, or public recognition awarded it. This is very singular. No doubt the unsettled condition of the country under the

Philistines partly explains it. But the priests who, after the destruction of Shiloh by the Philistines, settled at Nob appear to have made no efforts to reclaim the ark, or offer a shelter to it. It is not impossible, indeed, that the Mosaic conceptions and traditions, which were most closely connected with the ark, had become somewhat obscured in the minds of these priests. This ark David brought back with much ceremony to Jerusalem, and henceforth a worship of Jehovah was established in the centre of the kingdom, which was at least pure and free from all mediation by images. A later Psalmist (Ps. 132) celebrates this piety of David:

"Jehovah, remember for David
All his affliction;
How he sware unto Jehovah,
And vowed unto the Mighty One of Jacob:
Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house,
Nor go up into my bed;
I will not give sleep to mine eyes,
Nor slumber to mine eyelids,
Until I find out a place for Jehovah,
A tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob."

After he had brought the ark of Jehovah to Jerusalem, David determined to build a house for the Lord. This purpose he communicated to the prophet Nathan, who at first approved of it, but afterwards induced the king to abandon his design, and leave the execution of it to his son. The devout purpose of the king, however, was the occasion of a remarkable promise being given him from God through the prophet: "Jehovah telleth thee that He will make thee an house. When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, and I will establish his kingdom. I will be his father, and he shall be My son. He shall build an house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." The

point of this promise is, that Jehovah will build David an house, that is, He will establish his dynasty on the throne of Israel. The passage, in its present form, may, as some writers think, be later and amplified; but, to put it on no higher ground, such a promise was, in the circumstances, the most natural thing in the world. And to assume that everything of the nature of promise or anticipation is nothing else than a later fact antedated, is to 'pitch the pipe too low,' and to forget the prophetic gift of all religion, or at any rate what was just the characteristic of the religion of Israel, its outlook into the future. In all the religious history of mankind there is nothing that can be compared to the prophetic order in Israel. What cannot be denied to Isaiah must be conceded to Nathan, unless there be good reasons to the contrary.

David's religious care culminated in the Temple of Solomon. There is nothing unlikely in the tradition that David made many preparations for the temple, though it was left to his son to rear it. It was built, no doubt, on Phœnician models; but that the Phœnician idea, that of a temple to the sun, did not dominate it, may be inferred from the fact that the Adytum, or most holy place, was towards the west. The influence of such a house as this on the worship was naturally great. It was splendid for these times, and therefore attractive. The worship within it was to a God whom no image represented. The religious centre of the nation and its political centre were one; religion and patriotism united in one fervent stream. Of course Jerusalem was not the only sanctuary. The high places or rural sanctuaries continued. There was no law imposing a unity of sanctuary or place of sacrifice; it was left to circumstances, and events, and the natural gravitation of worship towards the central temple, to bring this about.

But David's character and religious zeal brought the kingship into very close relation with Jehovah, God of the

people. The king was His representative: "I have set My king on My holy hill of Zion."[1] This closeness of fellowship was, on the one side, sonship; and, on the other, fatherhood. And, by contrast with the history of Saul, the idea of a hereditary royal house arose,—a house established by Jehovah for ever. Probably the consequences of David's action in thus making Jerusalem both the civil and the religious centre of Israel's national life were not clearly foreseen by him; and it is difficult to guess what purposes and aspirations filled his mind at this time, though we are much more likely to err, if we suppose them petty or narrow, than if we imagine them wide. Ewald, whose judgments on Scripture, whether we acquiesce in them or not, are always dignified and worthy, regards Ps. 101 as belonging to this time, and as containing a programme of the royal Psalmist's rule:

> "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way:
> O when wilt Thou come unto me?
> I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.
> A froward heart shall depart from me:
> I will not know a wicked person.
> Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land,
> That they may dwell with me:
> He that walketh in a perfect way
> He shall minister unto me."[2]

The kingship in Israel, however, derived its significance from the previous idea that Jehovah was the true King of the people. The monarch was Jehovah's representative, sitting on His throne at His right hand. He was His son and fellow. This conception naturally suggested lofty ideas of the king. But in point of fact it is not the bare idea of the kingship that we find in the prophetic literature of Israel; it is always the Davidic kingship. It was the character and career of David that gave a complexion to the

[1] Ps. 2^{6}. [2] Ps. $101^{2-4.6}$.

idea of the kingship, which became part of its essence; and when, in times of disaster and decay, men looked back to David's reign, they transfigured it in the light of their religious hopes and aspirations. It thus became the type of the ideal universal kingdom of God which should yet arise upon the earth.

David had welded the tribes into a unity,—one people of the Lord. He, and particularly his son, broke down the ancient tribal constitution and barriers. This idea, that the people of Jehovah are one, we find often in later literature,—the unity is the correlative of the kingship, and even more of the one God. To Amos the disruption of the kingdom was a falling down of the tabernacle of David, and he prophesies its building up again and the restoration of its breaches. And to Hosea the schism of the North was a rupture in the one consciousness of the community, the spouse of the Lord, irreconcilable with the one consciousness of her God.

Once more, the peace which David at last brought about on every side suggested an ideal for all after times; and thus the idea of a peaceful king enters as a feature into all prophecies of the future.

And, finally, the extent of David's rule, which embraced all the smaller nations immediately touching on Israel, suggested the idea of a universal sway of the king of the kingdom of the Lord, and the submission of all nations to him.

Now we should no doubt be wrong in imagining that in David's own day these things were reflected on, as they were afterwards; or that the same religious view was taken of them, or the same ideals suggested by them. These were there, however, as germs which came to bear fruit. Succeeding literature, both Prophets and Psalms, are full of them, showing how religious minds were enlightened to perceive their meaning.

CHAPTER VI.

Prophecy in the Time of Elijah and onwards.

It is helpful to the understanding of Old Testament prophecy to find breaks in its long history. The religious development of Israel is mainly a development in the idea of God. As God was the only force in the world, particularly in human history, when a crisis occurred in history, some conception of God had to be called in to explain it; and when mysterious problems arose either in national or individual life, the problem was immediately reflected back upon God, and became one regarding His nature or action. In Israel religious progress assumed the form of a conflict. The traditional idea is that this people was perpetually falling into the worship of other gods than Jehovah, and was perpetually being reconverted to Jehovah-worship, only to apostatise again after a few years, and be again converted. Such alternations and fluctuations are really not after the manner in which the human mind operates. It would be like a tendency, say, of some German Protestant State to fall back into the religion of Rome, out of which to be again converted to Protestantism, and from that, after a few years, to fall away again, only to be once more, within an equally short time, reconverted to Protestantism. This cannot have been the character of the religious conflict which Israel's prophets had to wage. If a conflict implies lower elements and conceptions, it also implies a higher element which was conscious of the lower, and was striving to eject or transform them. Such a transmuting force existed in Israel from the be-

ginning, producing the results which mankind now inherit. This force may be identified with the moral element in the conception of Jehovah. Of course mere progress in itself does not decide that the progress was natural or supernatural. Our convictions in regard to this question must be formed rather from our examination of the results eventually achieved, from contrasting these results with those attained by any other people, and from the trust we place in the consciousness of the prophets, the leaders of Israel, who felt and affirmed that they were inspired of God.

It is with prophecy as a force, as a power in advancing the religion of Israel, that we are at present interested. Prophecy was the religion of Israel expressing itself, becoming aggressive and fertile. The true religion of Israel had before it two tasks, to overcome its antagonists, the false deities or Baals, and then to develop and purify itself. The first task was accomplished by Elijah and the revolution of Jehu; the second by the long line of canonical prophets.

The Canaanites, as we have seen, became Israelites; but, in becoming Israelites, they could not help carrying over into the life and thought of Israel much of their own debased religion and morals. It is proof of the vigour of the Jehovah-worship that it did not succumb before the worship of the native Baals. Still it could not but be that a religion of Jehovah would arise which was debased by many Canaanitish elements, just as the heathen nations of Europe, when they accepted Christianity, all took the name of Christians, but nevertheless carried over into their new faith many of their old superstitions, and practised them, for a time at least, along with their new faith.

From the time of David and Solomon downwards, the distinction of Canaanite and Israelite was obliterated, and all went by the latter name; but it will always remain uncertain how much of the superstitions which appear occasionally in the history of Israel, and are denounced by the prophets,

such as invocation of the dead, was really due to the Canaanites and the descendants of the mixed race that arose by intermarriage with Israelites. It would be interesting if we could ascertain the pre-Mosaic religion of Israel,—the religious ideas and practices of the tribes, before Moses induced them to accept the religion of Jehovah; and many scholars, in seeking to determine the ideas and practices of pre-Mosaic Israel, consider themselves entitled to assume that all the superstitions and rites found to exist in Israel, but denounced by prophets and legislators, were pre-Mosaic practices of Israel itself. But obviously this is a precarious assumption, as the practices may be purely Canaanitish. It is certain, for instance, that religious prostitution, which is denounced by both Amos and Hosea, was a Canaanite practice, and was first met with by Israel on entering Canaan.

With Israel, Jehovah took possession not only of the land and the cities and the civilisation, but also of the sanctuaries of Canaan. He was worshipped at the altars where the Baals had been worshipped before; and it was not unnatural that, though He bore another name, He should be thought, by the native population, not unlike the gods of whose altars He had taken possession. Two religions of Jehovah thus arose, and existed side by side, a higher and a lower: the purer religion of Mosaic Israel, and the debased religion arising through amalgamation with the native populations. In the latter there was an assimilation of the worship of Jehovah to the native worship, and consequently an obscuration of the loftier ethical conception of the God of Israel, who sank down nearly to the level of a nature god, whose office, as Hosea says, was to give the people "their bread and water, their wool and flax, their oil and their drink."[1] The conception which masses of the people had of Jehovah was one which He could not recognise as the conception of Himself.

[1] Hos. 2^5.

Hence He says: "Seek Me, and seek not unto Bethel."[1] Ostensibly and in name, the people worshipped Jehovah; but the conception they had of Him, and the service they rendered Him, were proper rather to a Baal or a local nature god.

Nevertheless the ancient Mosaic conception of the God of Israel and knowledge of Him still lived. It animated the prophets and no doubt many in all ages. The prophets, in seeking to inspire men with a purer idea of God, are all conscious that they are no innovators. They stand on the old paths. Jehovah, as they conceive Him, is the historical God of Israel,—their God from the land of Egypt. It is the people who have changed. Hosea is not only of this opinion himself, but he goes so far as to affirm that the people are conscious of the change: "I will return to my first husband, for it was better with me then than now." Thus a conscious antagonism arose, and came to prevail between two parties in Israel, manifesting itself at least from the days of Elijah downwards. It is an antagonism between two conceptions of Jehovah and two ways of serving Him.

This antagonism came to a head in the time of Elijah, and the revolution of Jehu put its seal to Elijah's life-work; it gave national expression to Elijah's demand: "If Jehovah be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him."[2] The numerical oneness of God was now recognised, at least for Israel. This was the result of the conflict. We should like greatly to know how far back these two parties were in conflict; to know something more of the history, the rise and growth of both parties in the great struggle that came to so dramatic an end, and was decided as it was in this age. But we have little information; we must in the main exercise our imagination. But that the conflict goes far back, we know for certain. On the one side we are informed that Saul "put away those that had familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land."[3] Invocation of the dead and similar

[1] Amos 5^5. [2] 1 Kings 18^{21}. [3] 1 Sam. 28^3.

practices existed in Israel; but even in this early period they were felt to be in conflict with the religion of Jehovah. That such practices had a strong hold on the life and the imagination of the people, may be inferred from the fact that Saul himself, in his great perplexity and abandonment, when Jehovah answered him neither by dreams nor prophets, nor by the oracle of the Urim and Tummim, had recourse to a woman with a familiar spirit (אִשָּׁה בַּעֲלַת אוֹב).[1]

On the other side, we know that Jeroboam introduced the golden bulls as symbols of Jehovah, or of some at least of His attributes, *e.g.* His strength, placing one at Bethel, the southern extremity of his kingdom, and the other in Dan, the northern extremity. This was a declension from the image-less or unsymbolical worship of Jehovah, which certainly prevailed at Shiloh and later in Jerusalem. The origin of the worship of calves, or rather, young bulls, is obscure. There is no probability that it was derived from Egypt, for the Apis worshipped there was a live bull; and it is scarcely conceivable that Aaron would have said regarding an Egyptian god, "These be thy gods (or, this is thy God), O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt."[2] It is more probable that the symbol was a common Semitic one, known and used at least among some of the elements of pre-Mosaic Israel. No doubt they would become familiar with it again in Canaan, and this would lead to its adoption by Jeroboam.

Now it is not quite easy to say what it is that the canonical prophets stigmatise as Baal worship. It is, I think, the general opinion among scholars that what they call Baal worship is not worship of Baal or the Baals as another god than Jehovah, but the debased worship given to Jehovah, —the kind of conception had of Him, and the kind of service rendered Him. The people meant to worship Jehovah, and thought they were doing so; but to the prophets their conception and their methods of worship

[1] 1 Sam. 28^{7}. [2] Ex. 32^{8}.

were mere heathenism. When Jeremiah, even in his day, charges the people with Baal worship, they indignantly reclaim against his judgment, denying that they worshipped Baal; but he replied, "How canst thou say, I have not gone after the Baals?" But no doubt another view of the prophet's language might be taken. Although lofty views of Jehovah were set before the people by Moses, and though they were forbidden to serve any god but Jehovah, yet we do not know on what level the mass of Israel stood at the Exodus; but if they stood on a low level, we do know how long pure views of God are in penetrating a people.

Whatever views of the oneness of God Moses might have had, the views prevalent in all the world at the time were far from monotheistic. The idea was that every nation, and even every locality, had its own god. When Israel entered Canaan, it found local Baals everywhere. They were the gods of the land. They were gods of nature, givers of fertility, bestowers of all the bounties of nature. With no strict monotheistic notions, the people might give their homage to these possessors of the localities where they settled, and seek from them their gifts. This did not mean renunciation of Jehovah, who was the national God. The individual might desire some superhuman power with which he could come into closer fellowship in his own locality and for his own needs. We find David's wife having Teraphim—household gods, which certainly did not supersede Jehovah, but might be appealed to for some domestic help. There is no likelihood that David used such gods, but possibly he did not interfere with the peculiarities of his female household. All this, however, is somewhat uncertain, and the Teraphim may have been images of Jehovah Himself.

Upon the whole, perhaps, the first view is nearest the truth, namely, that what the prophets stigmatise as Baal worship is the heathenish worship of Jehovah Himself, under a concep-

tion, and too often with rites, which left Him little higher than a Baal or local nature-god. But not improbably both views have some truth in them. It is not likely that in the prophetic age, one hundred years after the revolution of Jehu, which abolished Baal worship, Baal was served in Israel as a deity different from Jehovah; but prior to that revolution and to the age of Elijah, the Baals may have been served side by side with Jehovah.[1]

It is to be lamented that Hebrew literature leaves us so ill-informed as to the internal movements in Israel. David was a fervid Jehovist and Israelite, but Solomon, his son, was more cosmopolitan. Tradition asserts that he was the founder of the Wisdom in Israel. Though holding the general principles of the religion of Israel, the wise men were more universalist than particularist. They were what we might call the humanists of Israel.

Solomon was certainly not a theoretical or logical monotheist, for he built chapels for his foreign wives to worship their own native gods in. This was the universal practice in antiquity, and probably in general was regarded as being as natural as for a husband, in our day, to allow his wife to worship according to the religion she had been brought up in, though his own religion was different. It is possible that Solomon's practice offended some; and it may have helped to that alienation of mind from his house which issued in the disruption of the kingdom, though the main cause was no doubt his centralising the government, obliterating the distinction of the tribes, and taking the rule out of the hands of

[1] One of the chief supporters of the view that the Baals were worshipped by the people consciously as distinct from Jehovah is Professor Budde of Strassburg. His view is strongly put in some lectures delivered by him in America. Budde, however, feels that his view requires him to go further. He is obliged to assume—(1) that Jehovah had His seat at Sinai; (2) that He was not supposed to enter Canaan with the people—the ark was only a substitute for Him; (3) that it was only when Israel had conquered the whole land that Jehovah was supposed to take up His abode in it; (4) that up to that time the people of Israel were naturally worshippers of the Baals—the gods of the land.

the tribal elders and putting it into the hands of royal commissioners, and his heavy taxation.

A hundred years later than Solomon, a similar course was pursued by Ahab, but with results more immediately disastrous to the throne. Omri had married his son Ahab to the Tyrian princess Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre, formerly the priest of Melkart, the Tyrian Baal. When Ahab came to the throne, he built a house of Baal for his wife in Samaria, the capital of his kingdom, just as Solomon had done. But the times were changed. A new spirit was beginning to reveal itself in Israel. There is no reason to suppose that Ahab himself meant to abandon the worship of Jehovah, neither had he any wish to proselytise, much less to persecute. He was no propagandist. It was the Jehovah party that initiated the conflict. If we are in the dark regarding the processes which had long been going on in the direction of a syncretism of Jehovah and the Baals, and the assimilation of their worship giving rise to the confusion in the people's mind regarding them, we are equally in the dark regarding the opposite movement of protest against it. It was the act of Ahab in introducing the Tyrian Baal that brought the movement to a head, raising, if one may say so, the whole question of the Baals. But the movement had been rising for long, and though Elijah was its spokesman, there was behind him a great pressure. The disaffection had invaded the army. The people halted or limped between two opinions, afraid to give their convictions expression, being overawed by the court. It was not only a protest against the Baals, it had deeper and wider roots. The Baal worship was only an element in the evil. The Rechabites, who appear for the first time at this period, in their zeal for Jehovah protested against the whole civilisation inherited from the Canaanites, against agriculture and especially vine culture. They wished to reintroduce the nomadic ideal, when Israel's morals were austere, its life simple, and its religion pure.

The Nazirites also abstained from wine, the chief symbol of the Dionysiac civilisation.

Elijah did not apparently lay stress on these things. His mind was directed to something more fundamental. He had the conception—whether it was new or no—that Jehovah was a God beside whom no other god could co-exist. The erection of the Baal temple in Samaria brought him to give his conviction expression. To him, Baal and Jehovah represented two absolutely exclusive principles. Two beings entitled to the homage of mankind could not exist. For Elijah there could not be powers existing in different localities, or countries, equally entitled to the homage of men; there could be but One Holy One and One Mighty, who revealed Himself not in the life of nature, but in the laws of human society, and in the mind of man, in the moral demands of the human conscience. The conflict was seen by Elijah to be no more a conflict of nationalities —of Israel and Jehovah against another nation and its gods. The God of Israel was not subsumed in Israel's nationality. That God had contents of His own. He took His place over-against Israel, as formerly He had done against Israel's enemies. The national bond between Him and Israel was sundered; He stood apart. Elijah is zealous for the Lord of Hosts; his zeal for Israel is small. So far as he is concerned, Israel may perish; but Jehovah *must* come to His rights.

The conflict which thus came to a head in the age of Elijah, and to an issue in the revolution of Jehu, was more an external one, at least probably in the minds of many. Jehovah was recognised as God alone in Israel. Consequently this was followed by a conflict more inward. Though Baal as another than Jehovah was set aside, Baal had incorporated himself in Jehovah. Jehovah had Himself become a Baal—had been localised, as one might say. Now, the conflict was one not between Jehovah and another; it was an internal

one between Jehovah and Jehovah-Baal, as we might say,—between two conceptions of Jehovah,—the popular and the prophetic. In the popular conception, Jehovah was still mainly their national God, inseparably allied to them, the God of the land, giver of its corn and wine, and whose most pleasing service was sacrifice and offering; while to the prophets He was a purely ethical Being, elevated far above the people, the righteous Ruler of men, to whom material offerings were inappreciable, and whose service could be nothing but a righteous life.

When the prophets assail sacrifices and material offerings, their position, I think, is not this,—that sacrifices, without a moral life corresponding to God's will, are unacceptable to Him; it is rather this,—they oppose the popular conception, and say, "Jehovah desires this and not that." The people thought He desired sacrifices; the prophets, in opposition to this, maintain that He desires a moral life; and He desires this so much more than anything else, that He may be said not to desire anything else at all: "I desire goodness and not sacrifices, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offering."[1]

What proportion existed between the prophetic party and the more backward popular party cannot be known. The prophetic teaching, taken as a whole, amounts to the perfect ethicising of the conception of God. All writers agree that there were ethical elements in the conception from the first. Of course it becomes a question of the various elements in Israel, some of which might have a pure conception of deity, and some a conception less pure. But even those scholars who concede least, admit that in the prophetic age the conception of Jehovah was fully ethical. If from the beginning Jehovah had moral characteristics, He has now a moral character. But many things flow from this. The moral is of no nationality,—it transcends nationality and is

[1] Hos. 6^6.

human. The righteous God is God universal, God over all. Moreover, a God whose being is moral is less God of nature than of human society and life. He is God of history, and history thus becomes a moral process,—not the history of Israel only, but of mankind. The principles of the human economy over all reflect themselves in the mind of the prophets, and the economy is recognised to be moral.

But further, if history be a moral process, it will have a goal which is also moral, and which will at last realise perfectly its principles, seen to be imperfectly realised now. Thus arises an eschatology which proclaims that in the last days there shall be established a universal kingdom which will be a perfect kingdom of God upon the earth, bringing in everlasting righteousness. The movement of the prophetic thought towards universalism was aided by the entrance of the great empires of Assyria and Babylon on the stage of history. This gave them a new idea,—which the smaller States had not yet suggested,—the idea of the world. It created a new antithesis,—Jehovah and the world; and it opened up a new realm for the rule of Jehovah, their King, even all the nations of the earth.

At all the great crises in Israel's history prophets appear, teaching the people why it is that God is so trying and chastising them; and then, by opening up views of the future, they animate the people with such thoughts as enable them to face and pass through the crisis, still retaining their faith in Jehovah. Jeremiah, for example, by teaching that the kingdom of God was not bound to the form of a State, that though the State perished the people remained, and their fellowship with Jehovah remained, enabled his people to enter upon and outlive, as a religious community, the terrible disaster of the Exile. The state of the people's mind, and the condition of the land soon after the fall of the city, its desolation, the dreary silence in the streets and gates of Jerusalem, which used to ring with the

joy of feasts and dances, and the sense of humiliation of the people as a nation among the nations, are reflected in the beautiful collection of elegies known as 'The Lamentations'; while, somewhat later, the delirium of hope created by the victories of Cyrus and the gorgeous anticipations of a restored nation, and, through its restoration, of the evangelising of the world and the turning of all nations to the true God, fill the pages of the second Isaiah.

Thus the prophetic principles regarding Jehovah were conspicuously illustrated in the national history. Jehovah was God alone. He was righteous. His nature was inscribed in letters of fire across the people's life and experience. But, being written on the national history, these principles were as yet, to the individual mind, rather abstract. They were *schematic*, diagrammatic, seen to be true on the grand scale, and intellectually hardly yet felt to be true in the experience of the individual. They had to be assimilated into the personal experience, equated by reflection with the condition of the world, the state of the people, and the experience of the individual person. This process resulted, on the one hand, in a profound personal piety, such as we observe in the Psalms; but, on the other hand, it raised great problems, all of which became eventually problems about God.

(1) Jehovah was God alone and righteous; yet He took no pains to assert Himself against the world. He slept; the throne of the universe seemed vacant; the nations knew Him not, and wrought unchecked their cruelties and devastations on the earth. (2) So, too, Israel was His people; they preserved the truth; His cause and theirs was one. Because the eternal truth was among them and in their hearts, they were righteous as against the world, but all appeals to His tribunal were vain; their passionate cries that He would arise and plead their cause, and their passionate hopes, "He is near that will justify me,"[1] only expired on the air.

[1] Isa. 50^8.

(3) In like manner the individual pined away, solitary and neglected—"Mine eyes fail while I look for my God."[1] More daring spirits, like Job, rose in rebellion. The throne of the world was not vacant; it was filled by an Unrighteousness. The human conscience rose, and, proclaiming itself greater than Him, deposed Him from His seat. The Old Testament closed, leaving these conflicts still undecided. The people found a certain peace in hopes of the future, and endured as seeing Him who is invisible. The individual, too, caught glimpses of a future beyond the borders of this life, and in an ecstasy of faith could say, "I know that I shall see God." A few in their loftiest moments were able to bring the reconciliation into the present, and feel it, if not think it: "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee."[2]

The several stages, therefore, through which Israel's history ran, led the thoughts of prophets and people ever more and more from the external to the inward in Jehovah. First, the victories He gave them at the Exodus, at the entrance into Canaan, and in David's days, revealed the power of Jehovah. He was greater and mightier than all gods. Next, their defeats in after days, and the dissolution of the State during the prophetic age, revealed to them His inward Being. No prophet or writer ever attributed Israel's disasters to the might of the nations or their gods; they were due to Jehovah Himself, their own God. They were chastisements for their sin, revealing the moral nature of Jehovah. And finally, in the depression that lay on them after the Exile, never uplifted, they learned to transcend both history and external conditions, and to know Jehovah as a spiritual fellowship. Jehovah was God of the spirits of all flesh.[3] They were ever with Him. They were satisfied with His likeness.[4]

[1] Ps. 69^{3}. [2] Ps. 73^{23}. [3] Num. 16^{22} 27^{16}. [4] Ps. 17^{15}.

CHAPTER VII.

Prophet: Names and Definition.

The historical development of Old Testament prophecy having been described, it will now be of advantage to look at prophecy itself as a distinct and independent phenomenon. It is almost the most remarkable phenomenon in Israelitish life, — indeed, with one exception, the most remarkable. That one exception is the Decalogue. This simple, bare, abstract embodiment, in ten words, of the whole life of man, both in relation to one another and to God, is the most wonderful thing in the history of the human race. It stands, like Sinai with which it is associated, distant, solitary, and hid in heaven; and the people and the man who gave it to the rest of the world must ever excite our wonder and compel our veneration. Yet even the Decalogue might be considered a product of prophecy in the larger sense. Moses was, as we have seen, a prophet. He knows no higher title for himself: "A prophet shall Jehovah thy God raise up unto thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear."[1] But there is a distinction drawn between Moses and the other prophets: "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so . . . with him will I speak mouth to mouth."[2] "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."[3] Moses was no ordinary prophet, and no prophet could have done his work. That calm, unim-

[1] Deut. 18^{15}. [2] Num. 12^{6}. [3] Deut. 34^{10}.

passioned abstraction, called the Ten Commandments, could not have come from Amos, or Micah, or any of the prophets. These were all men of passion, living intense lives in the present. Such generalisations were beyond them. And that calm prophet of the wilderness, the prophet of mankind rather than of Israel, of whom only one passionate moment is recorded, could hardly have given out the fiery denunciations of later men. It will be best, therefore, to start with as few preconceptions as possible, and to draw our ideas of the prophets afresh from the prophets themselves.

If, then, we look into the prophetic literature, we find the prophets recognised as a distinct class as much as the priests. In Jeremiah we read: "The law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet."[1] In Ezekiel: "Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour upon rumour; and they shall seek (in vain) a vision of the prophet; and the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients."[2] And again: "As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets."[3] There was not only a distinct class of men known as prophets, but, though the literary remains of very few of them are left to us, they must have been at various times, if not constantly, a very numerous class. It is recorded in the history of Elijah that the pious chamberlain Obadiah hid a hundred prophets in a cave, and saved them from the fury of Jezebel.[4] A few years later we are informed that at a great crisis "the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear?"[5] Many years before this, in the history of Saul, we read that, when anointed king, on his

[1] Jer. 18^{18}. [2] Ezek. 7^{26}. [3] Jer. 2^{26}.
[4] 1 Kings 18^{4-13}. [5] 1 Kings 22^{6}.

way home a company of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them,—a phenomenon which gave rise to the proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"[1]

If, now, we open any of the writings left us by members of this class of prophets, say Hosea, we find that it begins, "The word of Jehovah that came to Hosea, the son of Beeri"; and some such phrase is used to characterise the writings of them all. If, further, we turn up these writings at any place, we find reference to this Jehovah: "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory."[2] "Woe unto them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong: but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah."[3] Jehovah is God—God of Israel. He has been so for long; always, indeed. "Hear this word," says Amos, "which Jehovah hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt."[4] And Hosea represents Jehovah as speaking thus: "I am Jehovah thy God from the land of Egypt."[5] What attributes the prophets assign to this God of Israel we shall see after. All I am concerned to reach just now, in order to arrive at the idea of a prophet, is that the prophets all believed in the existence of a God. This God they called specially Jehovah—God of Israel. The prophet stood in special relation to Him. It was this relation to Jehovah that made one a prophet. This relation was of such a kind, in the prophet's estimation, that he called what he said to his countrymen *the word of Jehovah.* Indeed, the prophet was the medium through which Jehovah, God of Israel, spoke to Israel,—as Amos says: "Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets."[6] And again:

[1] 1 Sam. 10^{11}. [2] Isa. 6^{3}. [3] Isa. 31^{1}.
[4] Amos 3^{1}. [5] Hos. 13^{4}. [6] Amos 3^{7}.

"The lion roareth, who will not fear? the Lord Jehovah speaketh, who can but prophesy?" [1]

This is the prophet's idea of himself as appears in Amos, one of the oldest of them; and the idea was certainly shared by the bulk of the prophet's countrymen. I do not say it was shared by all. Some scoffed, though scoffing is sometimes only a cover for a secret belief that is disliked, though it cannot be shaken off. They sneered at the prophet's denunciations and threats of a vengeance that never came: "Woe to them that say, Let Him make speed, and hasten His work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!" [2] There were professed sceptics in Israel down through her whole history. These men, no doubt, formed a school. They are frequently attacked in Proverbs under the name of *scorners;* and we learn from the 1st Psalm that they formed a society, as he is declared happy who does not sit in their *seat* or assembly. Perhaps at one time in Isaiah's days the reins of power had got completely into their hands, for that prophet exclaims, "Hear the word of Jehovah, ye *scornful* men," *i.e.* ye sceptics, "that rule this people which is in Jerusalem." [3] The word may here be applied generally; but the more the internal life of Israel is studied, the more will the same tendencies be discovered that manifest themselves among ourselves. The prophets and their writings are the exponents of the divine; the idea of a living, self-imparting God is the very well-spring of prophecy. But the opposite or humanitarian tendency had also its devoted followers. Those studies of human life, those efforts to express the laws of well-being, those profound ethical generalisations on man, current under the name of the Proverbs of Solomon, are decidedly humanitarian. In them, everything that is Jewish and particular disappears. It is man and the law of his perfection that is meditated upon. And this tendency

[1] Amos 3^8. [2] Isa. 5^{19}. [3] Isa. 28^{14}.

very readily ran into excess, and became naturalistic and sceptical. But, as I have said, the mass of the Israelites certainly agreed with the prophet, both in his estimate of himself and in what was presupposed by it. They believed in God. This God was a living, self-communicating God. His name was Jehovah. He was God of Israel. He made Himself known. He made His will understood by Israel, but He spoke to Israel through certain men. These were prophets. That this view was the prevalent one will appear if we consider the *names* applied to the prophets; and this consideration will also enable us to form a more exact idea of the prophet himself, and of his office and functions.

1. To begin, therefore, with the vaguest and most external name. The prophet is called *man of God;* a man of God אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים;[1] the man of God אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים.[2] This is the usual name for a prophet in the early days. It is used of Moses, Samuel, and David. It is the standing designation of the great prophets of Israel, Elijah and Elisha. When the son of the woman in Zarephath, with whom Elijah lived, fell sick and died, she said, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?"[3] The Shunammite made a little chamber for Elisha, and set there a bed and a table, and a stool and a candlestick, because he was an holy man of God; and when her child died, she laid him on the bed of the man of God.[4] This name gives the most general idea of the prophet: he is one that was thought to be more closely related to God than other men. The term also calls to mind the moral character of the prophet, and the ethical nature of all prophecy,—the woman said an holy man of God, and an apostle repeats her words: "Holy men spake from God, moved by the Holy Ghost."[5]

2. Again, the prophets are named *Servants of Jehovah*

[1] 1 Sam. 9^{6}. [2] 1 Kings 12^{22}. [3] 1 Kings 17^{18}.
[4] 2 Kings 4. [5] 2 Pet. 1^{21}.

עַבְדִּי יהוה. This is a very common designation, and adds something to the preceding. The expression 'Servant of Jehovah' always implies public service. There is a certain officialness about the prophet. Whatever designs Jehovah had, the prophet was active in fulfilling them. The designs of God all belong to one definite intention, and the prophet is active in effecting it. This name is very often applied to Moses, who, as embodying in himself all the mediatorial functions as Founder of the Theocracy, had all the mediatorial names competently applied to him in their highest meaning.

3. Once more, the prophet is called *Messenger of Jehovah* מַלְאַךְ יהוה = Angel of the Lord. "Who is blind, but My servant? or deaf, as My messenger that I send?"[1] "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me."[2] This name likewise adds something to the preceding. It defines the kind of service which the prophet is employed on,—it is in messages from God. This, of course, suggests those to whom he is sent, namely, men. This word *messenger* expresses what is exceedingly conspicuous in the prophets, namely, the sense of authority with which they spoke. They felt charged with a message. It is an exceedingly interesting question what this feeling was like, and how they verified it to themselves. It is indeed hardly probable that they verified it at all; but certainly they all had it. Prophecy is the intuition of truth, accompanied by the feeling that the truth was immediately communicated by Jehovah.

4. The prophet is perhaps also called *Interpreter* מְלִיץ: "Thy first father sinned, and thy interpreters transgressed against Me."[3] The prophets were Israel's interpreters, men who interpreted to Israel God's ways. This name is exceedingly descriptive of the whole attitude of the prophet: he interpreted God's doings to men; he realised the meaning of Israelitish history, and expressed it to the people. No name is more apt. The history reflected itself in the prophet's

[1] Isa. 42^{19}. [2] Mal. 3^{1}. [3] Isa. 43^{27}.

mind as in a mirror, and through him the nation read the meaning of God's procedure with it. As this truth reflected itself in the prophet's mind, it awoke in himself also the sense of his people's sin and imperfection. He is, so to speak, their conscience.

Now, then, we have gone so far, and found the ideas entertained regarding the prophet to be that he was *a man of God, a servant of Jehovah, a messenger from God, an interpreter to Israel.* What alone is wanted to give a full description of the prophet, as conceived in Israel, would be some indication, on the one hand, as to how he became possessed of the mind or word of Jehovah with which he came as messenger and interpreter to men; and, on the other hand, some indication of the way in which he communicated it to men, to whom he came from God. These elements, needful to the full definition, are supplied by two other names, which are the most common by which the prophet is known. These names are *Seer* and *Prophet.*

5. Two Hebrew names are translated *Seer*, namely, רֹאֶה and חֹזֶה. רֹאֶה is one of the oldest terms for prophet. The historical order is, no doubt, this: רֹאֶה, חֹזֶה, נָבִיא. The word רֹאֶה as a name for 'seer' went out of use, although it left its noun-forms מַרְאֶה, מַרְאָה, etc., behind it; and the word חֹזֶה came in and took its place. In 1 Sam. 9^9 we are told, "He that is now called a prophet (נָבִיא) was beforetime called a seer" (רֹאֶה). In this chapter Samuel is frequently called רֹאֶה, and, indeed, he calls himself so.[1] In 2 Chron. 16^7 it is said, "Hanani the seer (הָרֹאֶה) came to Asa, and Asa was wroth with the seer." So in Isa. 30^{10}: "Which say to the seers, See not."

The other term חֹזֶה is more frequent. In 2 Sam. 24^{11} Gad is called both prophet (נָבִיא) and seer (חֹזֶה) גָּד הַנָּבִיא חוֹזֵה דָּוִד. In 1 Chron. 25^5 the sons of Heman, the king's seer, are mentioned; and in 2 Chron. 19^2 the same Hanani, who

[1] 1 Sam. 9^{19}.

in 16[7] is called הָרֹאֶה, is styled הַחֹזֶה. In 2 Chron. 33[18. 19] the *words* of the seers are spoken of. The term perhaps gradually passed out of use. But it was still employed as late as the prophet Amos; for Amaziah, the priest of Jeroboam at Bethel, says to him, "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there";[1] and even later, for Isaiah says: "Jehovah hath closed your eyes, the prophets; and your heads, the seers, hath He covered";[2] and in the following chapter he plays upon both terms and their respective verbs, and speaks of lying children, "Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not" לָרֹאִים לֹא תִרְאוּ וְלַחֹזִים לֹא תֶחֱזוּ. In Mic. 3[7] it is used along with נְבִיאִים and קֹסְמִים (diviners).

The verb רָאָה being the word in common use for 'see,' the more elevated term חָזָה took its place for prophetic sight. But what exactly is it that is indicated by these two terms? Perhaps at first not more than this, that the persons so named had a capacity for *seeing* higher than that possessed by ordinary men. They had insight and discernment. This was not confined always to divine things, or to crises in religious life; it might, though rarely, be exercised on matters of domestic interest. But in all likelihood this superior insight was not considered a mere natural gift, but a special endowment from God. Again, as this insight was not habitual to the seer, nor the result of superior shrewdness or mental endowments of the ordinary kind, but was attained by him only occasionally and when in particular conditions, these states of abstraction, more or less complete, which in early times almost always accompanied the exercise of the seer's function, came to be considered an invariable element of the idea. Thus the seer was one who had extraordinary insight into the things of religious life, reached by way of vision.

Now, that state of abstraction or rapture, into which the seer fell, was very common in the East in early times, and

[1] Amos 7[12]. [2] Isa. 29[10].

even in other parts of the world. It was an accompaniment of profound mental activity. The person who was in that state was said to be in vision, or in the spirit. The truth which then dawned on his mind was called a vision (חָזוֹן), and he was said to see it. It was generally in this way that the prophet attained to truth. He was a seer—"the vision which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw." Naturally, however, the phraseology that arose in this way continued to be used in regard to the prophets and their utterances, even when no ecstatic vision preceded the oracles which they gave.

6. Two other names of the same kind as *seer* are צֹפֶה, properly *spy-er*, sentinel, man on the outlook; and שֹׁמֵר *watchman*. These are words that describe not so much the actual mode of reaching truth as the kind of effort put forth by the prophet to reach it. He looked out, he watched for God's revelation. These two words suggest voluntary effort; the previous two describe an involuntary state. The word צפה belongs rather to later usage, and is taken from the practice of setting a watchman on a tower to spy out and give notice of the first distant sign of danger or help. Thus Habakkuk says: "I will stand upon my watch, and will set me upon the tower, and will watch וְאֶצְפֶּה to see what He will say unto me." And the tidings came: "And the Lord answered me, and said."[1] Thus צפה is *outlook*, and חזה is *insight*.

7. The only other element which is needful to complete the idea of prophet is that one by which his mode of communicating with men is described. The most outstanding thing about the prophets, at least in the early and most powerful days of prophecy, was their habit of addressing men, even the highest. Hence what struck people most about them was their public speech. Accordingly, this appears to have furnished the term which is the commonest of all, namely, נָבִיא; though this title, as we should expect, embodies in it several of the other elements.

[1] Hab. $2^{1.2}$.

The difficulty in ascertaining definitely the philological meaning of נביא is due to the fact that the meaning, both of its root and of its form, is uncertain. For a long time it was generally considered that נָבִיא was a passive, or at least neuter participle, of the form קָטוּל = קָטִיל; but it is now held to be more likely that it has an active meaning like קָצִיר harvester, פָּקִיד overseer, and other words of the same form. As to the root, several explanations are given. It may be akin to the Hebrew נָבַע, to bubble up, to burst forth with violence, cf. נַחַל נוֹבֵעַ = a bubbling brook;[1] or it may be from an Arabic verb meaning 'to speak.' It is certain that the word itself occurs in Arabic; but then, instead of being originally Arabic, it may be a loan-word from Hebrew, as it is in other dialects.

Now, if נבא were really connected with נבע, as is, however, not very probable, it would describe the prophet on the side of his communications with men in the same way that חֹזֶה and רֹאֶה describe him on the side of his relations with God. The latter intimate that he had *insight* into divine things; this would intimate that he spoke to men in an excited and impassioned manner. Now, no doubt, the verbal forms from נביא, namely, נִבָּא, the Niphal, and הִתְנַבֵּא, the Hithpael, mean both to prophesy and to conduct one's self like a prophet, to be excited, to rave. It was, at least, very commonly the case that the prophet did present this wild appearance, and that he was altogether mastered by the power of the truths he had to utter; and so completely was he under their domination, that various physical effects of prostration or excitement followed, as when Saul lay all night naked on the ground and demeaned himself like a prophet. The balance of probability, however, is in favour of the root נבא being a common possession of the Semitic languages, since it is found in Assyrian in the name of the God of Eloquence, Nebo, the Mercury of Babylonia. It is quite likely, however,

[1] Prov. 18^4.

that the verb, in all cases where it has a sense that comes into consideration here, is really a denominative from the noun, and thus casts no light at all on the meaning of that noun itself. The native inhabitants of Canaan, worshippers of Baal, had also their prophets, and in great numbers. But these seem more allied to what we should call priests than to the Hebrew prophets. From the description given of them in the history of Elijah, where they are represented as leaping wildly about and cutting themselves with knives, they have been thought to resemble those called, in modern times, dervishes. What characterised them was their wild and frenzied excitement; and it has been thought that this excitation was probably the characteristic, expressed by the name etymologically, or at least suggested by it in usage. Then, further, it is suggested that the name passed over from the Canaanites to the Hebrews in some such way as this. During the Philistine oppression in the time of Samuel, the national feeling of Israel was powerfully awakened. Bands of enthusiasts joined together, partly of those whose national and religious feeling was already stirred, and partly with the view of stirring it in each other, and in the hearts of the people. These roaming enthusiasts seemed to the people to resemble not a little the נביאים of Baal and the Canaanites, and they gave them the same name—prophets.

I do not know that this hypothesis is very probable. It is certainly true that the verb derived from נבא means many times to *rave*, or be excited, as in the case of Saul; and there lingered long an idea that a certain excited demeanour was characteristic of the נָבִיא; for the soldiers of Jehu the son of Nimshi called the prophet who came to anoint their captain king, a wild fellow or maniac. In the same way the Greek *μάντις* and *μαίνομαι* are connected. But as the Canaanites spoke the same language as the Hebrews, one does not perceive why the latter should need to borrow the Canaanite word, even on the hypothesis—still a hypothesis

only—that this excitation was what the word expressed. Nor is it very probable that they would care to borrow a word from their Canaanite foes to express what was really the most distinctive thing in their own history. Besides, the Canaanite 'prophets,' to whom the title נָבִיא is applied, do not appear till the time of Ahab and Elijah; and then they are the prophets of the Tyrian or Zidonian Baal. Nor is it certain that such prophets were general among the Canaanites. What is certain, at any rate, is that the word נָבִיא was in use among the Hebrews long before the time of Elijah.

In this connection it ought also to be mentioned that there is another phrase, אִישׁ הָרוּחַ man of the spirit, which is occasionally applied to the prophets. Hosea, for instance, declares that "the prophet is a fool, the man of the spirit is become mad"; [1] and Micah says of himself: "I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah to declare to Jacob his transgressions, and to Israel his sins." [2]

Thus, while the root נבא meant to announce or utter in an excited, exalted manner, as used in Hebrew it always implies that the speaker's exaltation is due to the Spirit of God, and that what such a speaker announces is from God. But, of course, the terminology which arose in the earlier times of prophecy, when there really was excited utterance, was retained long after excitation had ceased to be a necessary accompaniment of prophetic speech. We seem entitled, then, to come to the conclusion that נָבִיא means not only a speaker, but an excited, impassioned speaker. So far, however, as Hebrew usage goes, the word never appears in a sense quite so indeterminate as this. It invariably has the meaning of *one who speaks for God*, one who is God's mouthpiece. There are two passages in the Pentateuch which, by their relation to each other, make this statement absolutely certain. The classical passage Ex. 7^1 not only settles that this is the meaning of נָבִיא, namely, 'one who speaks from God to

[1] Hos. 9^7. [2] Mic. 3^8.

men,' but also what we are entitled to say is included in that. It runs thus: "And Jehovah said to Moses, See, I have made thee a *god* to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet רְאֵה נְתַתִּיךָ אֱלֹהִים לְפַרְעֹה וְאַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ יִהְיֶה נְבִיאֶךָ. In an earlier passage, Ex. 4^{16}, while the phraseology is varied, it is equally illustrative of our argument. He (Aaron) shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him a God הוּא יִהְיֶה־לְּךָ לְפֶה וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה־לּוֹ לֵאלֹהִים. Thus a prophet is, shortly, a man who speaks to men from God and for God.

Now we can hardly say that it is included in such a relation that God dictated words to the prophet. Such an idea would scarcely seem justified by the relation of Moses and Aaron, which is said to be an example of the prophetic relation. Moses, being no speaker, was afraid to present himself before Pharaoh. Moses did not dictate words to Aaron. Since the employment of Aaron arose from his being better qualified for speech than Moses, can we argue, from the mere word 'prophet' and the relation which it implied, that God dictated words to the prophet? That may be; but it is neither implied in the word, nor in those passages which define its meaning. But this seems implied in them: that the prophet spoke according to the mind of God, and was conscious of doing so; that he spoke by commandment and commission of God, and was conscious of it; and that this commission was not a mere general preliminary consecration to an office, but a constantly renewed obligation to speak, and a supply of what to say on every specific occasion.

Accordingly, to sum up the results of our investigation: in the early times of prophecy, just as an abstracted ecstatic condition often accompanied the attaining of truth, so an excited demeanour often accompanied its delivery. Truth was new in those days. As it dawned on men they were shaken by it; and when they uttered it, it was with an excitation not unnatural to those who for the first time felt its power. The

moral world was an undiscovered region to them; and as they sailed through unknown seas, and beheld one awful form after another rise to meet their eye, the grandeur of the view convulsed them with wonder and awe; and as Truth unveiled to them her sublime face, these Orientals could not but utter passionate exclamations of surprise and joy, and earnestly press on others what they themselves had learned. I have said Truth; it would be fairer to say *God*. It was He, indeed, that the prophet felt himself catching a sight of,—He about whom were clouds and darkness; but, like some awful mountain hid in heaven, through breaks of the clouds and a momentary sinking of the mists, they caught but short glimpses of Him.

Perhaps the days of prophecy are over now. Truth has been won—it has appeared. The veil has been torn from God's face. One has lived who said, "I am the Truth"; "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Prophecy culminated, and perhaps really expired, in the Prophet of Nazareth. Yet the history of prophecy renews itself in the individual soul at least many times. There is the dawning of truth, awful or beautiful; the corresponding excitation; the growing of the light, until at last God's face is seen in peace. But just as here, so it was in prophecy. Excitation was no essential of it, neither was the abstracted state or vision. The first prophet and the last, like unto him, seem both to have received and to have uttered truth with a calm demeanour, free from all perturbation of mind or excitement of manner. Truth came to them through no medium. Its rays were pure. One was Himself the Truth; and with the other God spake face to face. So, too, the one was comparatively pure spirit, and the other perfectly. The rays of truth passed from their minds suffering no refraction; and when truth entered, it found no incongruous elements, and there followed no disturbance. But with other men that could not yet be. Disturbance is

the mark of imperfection, of unpreparedness. And, as has been seen, the word which we render 'prophet' means properly *excited speaker*. That being so, it implies that the speaker spoke under a pressure from behind; that he was acted upon by another, and carried forward to speak by an influence exerted upon him by God, whose messenger he was; as the apostle expressed it, he spake, *moved*, *i.e.* carried forward, by the Holy Ghost. This is the meaning of the term 'prophet' in Greek. It is an excited speaker, one who speaks under the influence of a God. And in Hebrew this additional idea of God behind the speaker, influencing him, is always present. Thus the prophet is one who speaks to men for God. Here, then, at last we have the ideas current in Israel about the prophet, and the definition of one. He is *a man of God, a servant of Jehovah, a messenger of God, an interpreter of God, a seer of the things of God, a speaker of the things of God to men.* Three things are thus involved in the very word *prophet*,—God, men, and one who acts as the medium of communication between them. This medium was the prophet. He could not be a prophet unless he spake to men; he could not be a prophet unless he spake from God.

Such a definition—*a speaker to men from God*—allows a very extended sphere of action to the prophet. Particularly, we cannot restrict prophecy, as it used to be restricted, to prediction, or the foretelling of future events. So far as we see, prediction was actually an element in the activity of most of the prophets, even in that of the Prophet of Nazareth. And, indeed, the future was what the prophets lived in. While the affections of other peoples turned to the past, and to the dying glories of a sun that was set, the Hebrew people, under the guidance of their prophets, were eagerly awaiting the break of a better dawn. "It shall come to pass in the latter days," they were always saying, "that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the

mountains, and all nations shall flow to it; and Jehovah shall judge among the nations; and they shall beat their swords to ploughshares." The people itself, and every office in it, and all its ideas, were predictions. Imperfect now, their perfection could only be in the future. But it was the prediction of longing for more fulness than was yet attained; the prediction of dissatisfaction; the prediction of hope, of anticipation, of awakened thoughts of human possibility and divine nearness; the prediction of a kingdom of God, founded but not yet all comprehensive. All life in Israel was in this sense predictive; and so especially prophecy, which was the mouthpiece of all these longings and hopes and joyful anticipations. But mere prediction of specific occurrences fills up but a very small part of the prophet's activity. Of Moses no predictions are recorded, unless this be one: "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up like unto me." Yet there arose not a prophet in Israel so great as he. His deeds were prophecies. He laid the foundation of the kingdom of God in Israel. He projected the ideal of a perfect humanity in that Decalogue which was given through him.

Amidst the vast collection of sayings uttered by the Prophet of Nazareth, there are few predictions. A few sentences about His own death, and the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world,—sentences which, though predictive, involve the deepest truths of Christianity, and have almost nothing of contingency in them,—are all that He uttered that can be called prediction. Expositions of the moral law; practical maxims regarding life; the inculcation of mercy and humility; discourses on the nature of the kingdom of God among men; assertions of the universal care of God, and His love and compassion for sinners; deep sayings about Himself and His relation to God and to men,—these and such like form the staple of His teaching. And perhaps the same proportion might be found between the predictions of the prophets and their general teaching.

The prophet was essentially a man of the present, conditioned in his deliverances by the necessities of his time, to which he applied general principles of truth, and only lifting the veil of the future when it was needful to cheer or soberise the hearts of his contemporaries by the sight of what should certainly come.

There are one or two things which the definition of a prophet just given suggests. As the prophet was a man of God, a messenger of God, an interpreter of God, and the like, we may assume that in this service all the man was called into requisition. I have not cared to say anything very definite about what that service was, for that is to be gathered from the study of the Prophetic Books. But that the prophets believed God had a distinct design in His administering the affairs of the world, we may readily conceive. That things were moving under His impulse and control to a definite effect, they certainly believed. They also certainly believed that they had been more or less put into possession of what that effect was. It may, in a word, be called a *Kingdom of God*. This is the main prophetic idea,—a kingdom of God. But what I wished to say was, that as men of God, all the man was called into requisition in guiding things to this result. Moral instincts, religious hopes, human aspirations, love of truth and beauty, patriotism,—all sides of human nature were called into operation.

The prophets were the bearers of the idea of God's design; and this function of theirs being so general, needing men of such diverse types of mind and character, so as to enter into the circumstances and interpret to men the design in things, and put them on the true way of realising it, explains why the prophets formed no caste. They were not, like the priests, a tribe. The functions of the latter were more mechanical. Little talent was needed. A pure personal character sufficed. But the prophetic work required men of intellect and breadth, very often of great personal courage and weight, men of wide

sympathies and skill and policy, who could be diplomatists, or tribunes, or kingmakers, or historians, or poets,—as the exigency of the time required. Hence it was needful to lay under contribution the whole extent of the nation. Wherever a natural character was found adapted to the need of the time, there the prophetic career was open to him. It can hardly be doubted that the highest talent in the nation was drafted into the ranks of the prophets, for it is hardly conceivable that loftier genius could have existed among the people at any time than is displayed by Joel, or Micah, or Isaiah.

Attempts have been made to explain the predictions in the prophets by regarding them as the expressions of sagacity and political or moral foresight. All thoughtful men have in them something of the prophetic gift. By observing what has been, they can come pretty near what will be. A man may accustom himself to find the laws under events; or to some high minds these laws may present themselves almost of themselves, and out of any given circumstances they may be able to sketch the future. Whether the predictions of the prophets are to be so explained, is a question to be left over for the present. I refer to the opinion that they are, in order to show what qualities are recognised in the prophets. Nothing is more true than that Isaiah and Samuel and Jeremiah were statesmen of the highest capacity, and patriots of the most disinterested kind. Whatever insight and long experience and patient observation, coupled with skill to detect the moral laws that regulate human history,—the thing most helpful to a statesman, though too seldom possessed,—whatever insight and foresight all this could give, they possessed.

Again, these predictions have been explained by supposing them moral presentiments. They are the passionate expression of the desire for national prosperity, for the destruction of adversaries, for freedom, for peace, for the incoming of a

better day, for the salvation of God. The heart of man is deep; there well up heavenly aspirations out of it, strong sympathy with right, sharp impatience with oppression, instinctive hope of the triumph of good; and these natural feelings, strongly expressed with all the moral energy that gives man such power, and makes even the shallowest heart prophetic of yet better things,—these are the predictions which we find in the Old Testament. Whether they are so or no, I will not now dispute. But the qualities which this theory ascribes to the prophets, they certainly possessed. They were the foremost men in Israel,—the most richly endowed moralists, poets, statesmen,—the flower of the nation.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Position of the Prophet in the State.

We must now endeavour to come to an estimate of the position of the prophet in the theocracy. We have already found that a 'prophet,' according to the etymology and the usage of the word נביא, means one who 'spake for God.' Such a definition allows a very extended sphere of action to the prophet. Particularly, we cannot restrict prophecy, as it used to be restricted, to prediction. The prophets teach great religious truths, and illustrate their development; they do not foretell contingent events. Joel does not predict Pentecost, he predicts the outpouring of God's Spirit; and if any future outpouring were to take place, we should be entitled to consider it a fulfilment of his prophecy. The prophet spoke to the people, and, of course, to the people that then was, to that consciousness which waited for and listened to what he uttered. No doubt a prophet might speak things that referred to times beyond the then present of the people of God. The most powerful influence which a prophet, at many epochs of the people's history, could bring to bear on their minds, might be drawn from what he was able to indicate to them of the future,—whether the future was to be full of mercy or of judgment.

In point of fact, the characteristic attitude of the Old Testament Church was its attitude of expectancy in regard to the future. This is even the attitude of the Church now, and has been in all ages. But it was so to a greater degree in the time of Israel. Then, salvation had been in

no way realised as it is now. Men looked for it. They waited for the salvation of God. And there is perhaps no prophet who does not give some account of the final salvation of the people. For the manner of the prophets is to start from the condition of the people present to them, and, taking up the threads of need, or calamity, or sinfulness, to run them out in an unbroken line of divine interference, till they end in the great day when God shall come in His fulness for the deliverance of Zion. The prophet Joel, starting from the plagues of locusts and drought, which he regarded as direct judgments of God, does not pause till he shows how the same principles of God's government manifested in these plagues, in combination with His great redemptive purpose, will find their perfect fulfilment in the final condition of things, when God will manifest Himself perfectly in judgment and in mercy,—in mercy by pouring out His Spirit on all flesh; and in judgment in the terrible signs that precede and accompany the day of the Lord. All the prophets open up glimpses of this sort, although each does it in his own way, and in a manner suitable to the conditions of his own time, so as to be understood by the men to whom he spoke, and whom he desired to influence.

To exert this influence upon the men of his own time, was the direct and main purpose of the prophet. He had not in his own mind a direct intention with regard to us. But what was written of old time, was written also for our learning, because our condition is still, even as that of the people then was, a condition of expectancy. And the principles of God's providence are unchangeable. And these ancient writings are full of instruction to us in another way. We are able to see how those to whom they were first addressed received them, and acted in respect to them; and how by obedience or neglect, they became heirs of the promises, or fell short of them; and thus we have not only the primary truth, but the secondary lesson drawn from the

conduct of those to whom the truth first came. But, however much the prophet referred to the future, his reference was designed to bear upon the condition of the people present to him, and to influence the men of his own age.

Influenced partly, perhaps, by the name *prophet*, and partly, it may be, by the great apologetic use made of the prophecies in the New Testament, the Church was formerly inclined to lay almost exclusive stress upon the directly predictive element in prophecy, so as almost to consider prophecy and prediction to be things identical. But the Hebrew words for prophet do not suggest any such pre-eminence of the element of prediction; and modern writers on prophecy of all schools have drawn attention to the wider significance of the Hebrew terms. From writers of the Naturalistic school, such as Kuenen, who deny prediction altogether, this was to be expected. But writers of a wholly opposite school concur in assigning to prediction a limited place in the activity and writings of the men called prophets. Thus Dr. Payne Smith in his Bampton Lecture, entitled 'Prophecy, a preparation for Christ,' says: "It is possible that the wonderful series of absolute predictions respecting the person and offices of the Saviour may have led in many minds to too complete an identification of prophecy with the foretelling of future events" (p. 41). All this is of importance to remember. Yet, on the other hand, we must be on our guard against one-sidedness, and must take care not to exclude from our conception of prophecy the element of foresight and prediction. Our mental danger is reaction. When we have emancipated ourselves from one error, we are apt to fall immediately into the error opposed to it. It is perhaps true that mere contingent events are not often predicted, though there are examples even of this; it is chiefly developments of the history and condition of the kingdom of God, but by no means always internal and moral developments. There are

also external events on the stage of the world's history, which required to be brought about in order to allow of the inward expansion, which is, no doubt, the main object to which the prophets direct their mind.

The true idea and *rationale* of prophecy on its more predictive side is given in a very remarkable chapter of Isaiah, chap. 41. In this chapter, prediction of events is claimed for Jehovah and Israel, and denied to the gods and the idol worshippers. The events claimed to have been predicted are the rise of Cyrus, and his victorious career and assault upon Babylon,—events needful for the freeing of God's captives and the restoration of Israel, which again is necessary for the evangelising of the world. The predictive element in prophecy is there connected by the prophet with the nature of Jehovah,—He is the first and the last,—He initiates all the movements of history, and He brings them to an end. He sees the end from the beginning. Thus He is able to foretell. But it is His relation to Israel that causes Him to foretell, and announce beforehand. For His purposes can only be fulfilled by the concurrence of men, to whom they must be revealed beforehand. He takes His people into His confidence,—the light of Israel illuminates the future.

The idea of a prophet as one nearer to God than other men, suggests how the prophet may obtain a knowledge of the secret counsel of God, and be able, and indeed under obligation and pressure, to proclaim it to the world. Hence Amos says: "Surely Jehovah doeth nothing, but He revealeth His secret (סוֹד) to His servants the prophets."[1] The Lord imparts His counsel to the prophets, and they in turn are constrained to impart it unto men. The prophet is the bearer to men of God's revelation,—the bearer and the utterer, whether he bear it consciously or not, whether he utter it in words or not. Generally, or perhaps always, the prophet will be conscious of being charged with the truth.

[1] Amos 3^7.

Even the patriarchs must to this extent have understood their mission. Generally, too, though not always, the mode of divulging the truth will be by speech. Sometimes, however, it is done by signs and miracles and judgments. Thus we might exhaust the conditions of prophecy by saying that it required knowledge of truth pertinent to the time, and the feeling of pressure to declare it.

Prophecy was the utterance of truth pertinent to the time. There is no such thing in Scripture as prophesying, or even speaking, at large. There was an occasion for every scripture. When first uttered, it had a particular application. It has also a general application, because, though circumstances change, principles remain the same. Prophecy was the speaking of divine truth relevant to the occasion when it was spoken. Now, to go fully into the question of relevancy would be to discuss the question of the connection of prophecy with history in Israel. No doubt there is such a connection, and it is both intimate and, as we might say, intentional. The nation went through certain historical experiences, and prophecy deduced and applied their lessons. And this also is true, that these historical evolutions were of a kind containing in them much more moral teaching than the evolutions of ordinary history, though that, too, is teaching of the same kind. Jewish history teaches the same lessons as ordinary history, but much more perspicuously. And prophecy deduces these lessons.

Prophecy is the philosophy of history. Prophecy is history become conscious,—history expressing its own meaning. But prophecy is not the philosophy of ordinary, but of Jewish, history. Now, Jewish history consisted of two factors, human activity, as in ordinary history, and a supernatural divine guidance; and therefore prophecy must partake of two factors also, human insight and divine illumination. Hence, as Jewish history did not move altogether like ordinary history, but was to some extent led by

the supernatural divine element in it, prophecy must be instructed as to this divine element, and be able to anticipate and predict. And thus it was not confined rigidly to generalising on the part of history, or estimating the meaning of the present. Being, so to speak, the consciousness of history,—of a history human and divine,—it could foresee, too, whither the history was moving, and was able with certainty to forecast.

The question whether prophecy and history are properly two co-ordinate things that fit exactly into one another, but are both independent, or whether prophecy be not rather secondary, the institutions and condition of the people at any time being primary, the mould, as it were, that gave it its shape, is a question that has been discussed by some scholars. But it is not probable that the prophetic office was a thing altogether secondary to the history. Prophecy did not confine itself to mere interpreting, it *added*. It made contributions. Is it likely that all theocratic ideas were embodied in the theocracy? There was a basis for them in the theocracy, but history may have added many; and prophecy may, by starting ideas, have given new turns to history. I should put prophecy on a footing co-ordinate with the institutions and the history,—not make it the mere consciousness of them, but designed to add to them,—to lead them to issues they would never otherwise have reached.

It cannot be supposed that Israelitish institutions were greater than Israelitish men; that the history of Israel was so mechanical that it was an evolution by means of institutions merely, and not also through human minds, or indeed not mainly through human minds. I dislike any theory that would put any other source or means of revelation on a level with the mind of man. It is there that God will primarily beget the truths He reveals. Of course, even there He acts not without means, such as events and institutions; but the

events and institutions will only be the *occasions*, not the measure, of the prophetic truths. And even the institutions are the products of the human mind so far that they were imposed on Israel not mechanically, but through the co-agency of great minds. For the Mosaic ritual must be regarded as produced by the reasonable concurrence of men like Moses. The fact is evident that the ritual law grew, was modified, was at various times codified in parts, and at last authoritatively completed.

If, on the other hand, prophecy were but secondary, then the way the prophets on all occasions reached their prophecies would be by a moral road,—that is, by reflection on the nature of the kingdom of God, and on its present circumstances. Thus they would attain to a knowledge of what events must come about in order to its realising its true purpose, and thus they would be able with certainty to predict them. There is, however, the closest connection between the truth delivered at any particular time, and the crisis at which it was delivered. But to pursue this question would take us down through the whole course of the history to inquire how the prophet suited his words to the successive historical relations in which the people stood politically to other nations, and to the successive social conditions which the nation itself passed through during its life as a people. Let us look rather, at present, to the relations in which the prophet stood to those elements and phases in the State that were essential and invariable.

What was the place of prophecy among the other permanent institutions in the State? What was its historical appearance as an institution in the theocracy, and what were its functions? Now prophecy in this sense arose after the constitution had been settled. No doubt, if Abraham, as mediating between God and the world, as bearer of God's revelation, which was at this time almost condensed into the covenant of promise: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the

families of the earth be blessed,"[1]—if Abraham was called a prophet, and truly, for no one ever was the medium of a higher revelation from God than this, so also was Moses. When predicting the rise of a prophet in after times whom the New Testament recognises as Christ, Moses said: "A Prophet like unto me shall the Lord your God raise up unto you." And the Old Testament knows no such high prophetic position as that of Moses: "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."[2] The office of Moses in ordering the constitution was prophetic. He mediated between men and God in the matter of revelation. He laid God's will before men. The great principles of law and morality came to the world by Moses. He was the prophet, less of the Jews than, we might say, of mankind. But he was more than a prophet. He combined in himself for a time all the powers and functions of the new theocracy. Hence the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews compares the Apostle, *i.e.* Prophet, and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus, to him, saying that Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house. They agreed in being faithful, and in the universality of the sphere of their faithfulness, *all* God's house: they differed in this, that Moses was a *servant in* the house, Christ a *Son over* the house; and faithfulness assumes a different complexion when it is that of a son.

And, in truth, there arose no prophet like unto Moses; for those that followed him chiefly applied his work to their own time. But the prophetic office, as we are now speaking of it, was a machinery for carrying out the constitution given to the people of Israel by Moses, who, according to the idea of the Old Testament, was certainly a prophet: "By a prophet Jehovah led Israel out of Egypt; and by prophets was he preserved."[3] We shall therefore do most justice to the Old Testament idea of prophet if we regard the prophets as the

[1] Gen. 12^3. [2] Deut. 34^{10}. [3] Hos. 12^{13}.

successors of Moses, and as standing in the same free relation to God as he did. There was properly no prophetic office with defined functions like the priesthood. The prophet was simply a man called and commissioned by the God of Israel to take the religious destinies of the people into his own hand for the time being. This is the primary meaning of the oft-quoted passage in Deuteronomy: "A prophet shall Jehovah your God raise up of his brethren, like unto me," where 'a prophet' refers primarily not to an individual but to a class, or to a succession of individuals. The passage warns Israel against listening to diviners such as abounded among the Canaanitish nations, and promises the people a succession of true prophets like unto Moses, who would receive communications from God directly, and not through the means employed by diviners.

This definition sets the prophets in the same line with Moses: they were his legitimate successors. The only difference between them was that, while he laboured as a Founder, they built on the foundation which he laid. They found a constitution made by him in some sort already existing. This constitution had certain principles. The prophets understood them, and explained them, and applied them to the constantly altering circumstances of the people. *They were the bearers of the idea of the Theocracy*, entrusted with it, and commissioned to carry it out till it reached its final intention. Now this office of theirs being so general, needed men of diverse types of mind and character so as to be adapted to enter into whatever crisis the State had reached, and apply to it the principles of the constitution. The prophets directed the whole movements of the constitution, and wielded all its resources. Hence they had to be selected from the whole extent of the nation. Wherever a natural character was found adapted to the need of the time, its possessor might be called and commissioned to exercise the prophet's office. And when one so called sought to put away

the office and its responsibilities from him, pleading his own unfitness and immaturity in spiritual things, saying, "Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child," he was answered: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee."[1] God had not prepared this development of the sacred history without having also beforehand prepared this man to be its prophet, to interpret it to the nation, and to guide it to its true issue.

Now the prophets never represent themselves as the heralds of truths, or an order of things, wholly new. They stand on certain old and acknowledged foundations. The novelty of their teaching goes no further than to indicate how old truths are to be adapted to new circumstances, and how amidst necessary modification their essence is to be preserved. It is the men whom they oppose that are the innovators—the men who sought to introduce other gods, or to degrade the spiritual worship of Jehovah into a sensuous ritualism. Such men were either pursuing false ends, which were not those set before the theocracy by Jehovah its head; or they were attempting to promote what might be the true ends of the kingdom of God by false and deceptive means, as by worldly alliances with the idolatrous powers around. The prophets charge their opponents, and the people whose practices they denounce, with a retrograde movement: "They have forgotten the Holy One of Israel, they have gone away backward"; and with declension in public morale: "They have corrupted themselves."

Now the general presuppositions on which the prophets take their stand are these three: first, the idea of the covenant between Israel and Jehovah, whereby Jehovah had taken Israel out from among the nations, by election, to be His people, and had on the other side become their God. This is the fundamental idea. But such an idea is a very

[1] Jer. $1^{5.6}$.

fertile one, and has many results. There follows from it the unity of the worship. Any service of any other God was a breach of the fundamental paction between the two. But, further, Jehovah was not a Deity without attributes. On the contrary, His attributes were very distinct and pronounced: "The righteous Jehovah loveth righteousness." The covenant had conditions. It was to be maintained only by the observance of these. Such conditions are those briefly condensed into the Law of the Ten Words. Assuredly, there is no idea more fundamental in prophecy than this of the covenant relation of Jehovah and Israel. This is what is meant by saying that Israel shall be holy, *i.e.* consecrated to Jehovah. And when the ethical character of Jehovah shone out in its clearness to the eyes of men more and more, the purifying influence of such a relation was not to be calculated. Hence this relation of Jehovah to Israel was a ready axiom and instrument in the people's hand to apply to prophets who might come before them. If the prophet pretended to speak in any other name than that of Jehovah, he had judged himself; instead of listening to him, they were to stone him.

But this leads to the second idea, namely, that this covenant relation between Jehovah and Israel had a purpose in view, a goal set before it. This was, no doubt, contained in the very idea of the covenant; but it was not yet realised. That purpose was the reaching of a perfect kingdom of God upon the earth. This was Jehovah's intention in entering into such relations with Israel. The covenant was the founding of such a kingdom. The kingdom was the external expression of the covenant. But forces within the covenant were to work towards its perfection. Its perfection was not yet attained, it lay in the future. But the germs of it were deposited in the idea of the covenant, and in the nature of the spiritual God that was worshipped, and in the conditions of the covenant. But these germs had to be expanded, till their

principles should take possession of every heart among the people. And not among the people merely, but among mankind. For prophecy was not particularistic or inclusive in any other sense than this, that it believed itself alone in possession of the truth for the present; but the truth was destined by its means to become the heritage of all peoples. This idea of a kingdom of God, founded, and, though not yet realised, certain to be realised as a universal dominion, through Israel, is perhaps the great public idea of the prophets. This was the end the covenant had in view. And one can readily see what a variety of spiritual truths the prophets had occasion to develop in their endeavours to expound this idea, and to lead on the history of the nation to its accomplishment.

Third, the form which this kingdom of God has, is the Theocracy, or external Jewish constitution. This is the external form within which the true kingdom exists and is realised. The kingdom of God has already a shape, and it is this kingdom or government of Israel. The prophets and Old Testament writers do not speak of the kingdom or government of Israel in any other aspect of it than as it is the kingdom of God. The Old Testament does not conceive or speak of it as an ordinary kingdom among the kingdoms of the world. It is, as it then was, the kingdom of God. Hence the prophets do not draw any distinction between an inner or true spiritual kingdom and their own external one. Consequently, all their efforts are directed towards the well-being of the Israelitish State as it existed externally in their own day. This was the kingdom of God already founded, destined to attain to a perfect purity of worship and morals; destined to embrace not only Israel, but all the world; and every effort they could command was directed towards its conservation, and the right understanding of its principles, and the fulfilment of its great aims.

It is, no doubt, the case in regard to this third point, that

events came into conflict with their ideal, and at last taught them that the kingdom of God could exist apart from any embodiment of it in the form of a State. But even the teaching of this truth can hardly be said to have made them depart from their ideal.

These are the main ideas that appear as presuppositions of the prophetic order itself, and of its teaching. These ideas have almost indefinite ramifications, and extend out into almost all the particular doctrines that form the prophetic teaching. To understand, therefore, the extent of the prophetic functions, we must first describe, at least in its broad outlines, the constitution of the theocracy. Israel existed both as a Church and as a nation. The people were organised into that form and for those purposes which we call a Church, and also into that form and for those purposes which we call a nation. I say into the one form of organisation, and also into the other. For though these two organisations were not at all so distinct as among ourselves, yet they were not among the Jews quite identical. It is true that the Church was coextensive with the nation, and that all the citizens were also members of the Church. And not only that, but they were members in virtue of being citizens. The visible form the Church took was the form of a State. Nevertheless the two aspects of the people are quite separable in idea, and ought to be kept separate.

Now the prophets stood related to the people in no less than three distinct characters, as simple individuals, as an ecclesiastical organism, and as a State. These are just the three relations in which men still stand to God. And the prophet was the mediator of God's revelation to the people in these three aspects. Thus the prophet's function most nearly corresponded to that of the preacher among ourselves, and even more nearly to the function assumed by such men as Knox and the Reformers. The prophets were men who

knew God's will, and had to declare it to all classes in their several conditions. Of course, they differed from Christian ministers in this, that they not only expounded the Law, and a revelation already given; their expositions were additional elements of the revelation. And the history they were interpreting was not ordinary, but redemptive, history.

The prophet was the medium of communicating God's will to the people in addition to what of His will was already fixed, congealed, so to speak, in institutions. There was still a living fountain out of which there welled forth God's commands, and which sent its waters down through every channel of the State, beneath the crust of institution. This living fountain was the prophet. And he could speak with regard to every function in the State. But when he proceeded to *act*, it was either because the emergency furnished no other man so fit, or because, in addition to being a prophet, he held other offices such as the priest's or the statesman's. It is quite plain that there were many judges, such as Othniel, Barak, and Samson, who were not prophets; and, on the other hand, that there were prophets who were not judges. There were also prophets who were judges, such as Samuel and Deborah. But this no more implies that the prophet, in virtue of that office, was also judge, or civil ruler, than the fact that Eli was judge implies that this office was involved in the high priesthood.

If, therefore, we bear in mind that the prophet was the point at which God's revelation and will to Israel was still, so to speak, fluid, and not congealed into institutions, we shall have a true idea of the prophetic office. For all other ways of knowing God's will seem gradually to have ceased. For a time, a kind of mechanical application under the direction of the priesthood, called the Urim and Tummim, was resorted to; but this fell gradually into desuetude. God withdrew, and no longer spoke through it. Thus the prophet rose to be His one appointed organ of utterance. Even extra-

ordinary messengers, called angels, are rarely sent to Israel after the time of the Judges, when prophecy under Samuel became a recognised institution. The prophet took up the law, and made it alive and powerful, giving it flexibility and novelty of application. He descended into the history, and in him the history became articulate, and spoke through him its meaning to the nation. He seized the spirit that lay imprisoned in every office and rite, and, stripping off the rigid form, displayed it to the eyes of the people.

Thus, first of all, in relation to the individual men of the nation, the prophets were moral teachers. They everywhere chastised wrong-doing, sensuality, drunkenness, and the too common oppression of the poor by the powerful, a vice that seems ineradicable from Oriental society. Hosea thus sums up the catalogue of offences: "In swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood."[1] The prophets everywhere hold up before the people the inevitable consequence of these sins,—political dissolution. From the combination of these two ideas, a reprover and guardian of the morals of the people, and an outlooker or watcher for events that shall develop the present crisis, and be the punishment or reward of the people's action, the prophet received the name of *watchman* (שֹׁמֵר) or outlooker (צֹפֶה). Thus in Isa. 21^{11}: "One calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night?" And in the same chapter, v.^{6}: "Go, set a watchman, and let him declare what he seeth." But this idea is most fully realised in later prophecy, *e.g.* Ezek. 3^{17-21}.

Again, as ecclesiastics, the prophets often denounced the people's carelessness in sacrificing, the perfunctoriness and routine of their ecclesiastical performances. Thus Isaiah says: "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me."[2] And Amos: "I hate, I despise your feast days; I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Take

[1] Hos. 4^{2}. [2] Isa. 1^{13}.

away from me the noise of thy songs; but let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."[1] Everywhere the prophets seek to recall the people to the real meaning of their ecclesiastical rites, and everywhere they exalt this meaning above the mere ritual. "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings,"[2] says Hosea. Even when the State was overthrown at the Exile, they look for its restoration. Perhaps these three fundamental presuppositions of prophecy might be put otherwise, and more nearly in terms of the Old Testament itself.

The prophetic teaching presupposes, and rests upon, two principles and a fact. First, that Jehovah is Israel's God alone; and, second, that Jehovah, Israel's God, is ethical in His Being, and demands moral life from those that serve Him as His people. And these two principles are, so to speak, fused together into an emotional unity by the fact of redemption, which the people had experienced, and which brought them into existence. These two principles and this fact are the essential meaning of the Decalogue. They are the prophetic presuppositions; and the prophetic teaching consists in their expansion and application to the nation's conscience at all times. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is just; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?"[3] is the language of Micah. "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?"[4]

Thus, even in teaching, a great difference existed between the prophets and the priests. The latter merely taught the rites to be performed; the prophets drew out the spiritual truths everywhere underlying the ritual. The text of all prophecy is the Book of Deuteronomy. That book is a homily on the constitution. It is the Sinaitic covenant, and the redemptive history translated into its principles. And the prophets are never weary of appealing to it. Indeed, so singular is the

[1] Amos 5^{21-24}. [2] Hos. 6^{6}. [3] Mic. 6^{8}. [4] Mic. 6^{7}.

similarity that many critics maintain Deuteronomy to be a compilation from the prophets,—to be the Mosaic constitution from the point of view of prophecy in the age of Hezekiah or Manasseh. That is a critical question, and the way we answer it need not affect either our idea of what prophecy is, or what Deuteronomy is, though, of course, it affects our opinion of the relation between them, and perhaps our idea of the era at which the views of the constitution given out in Hebrew prophecy came to be current in the nation.

Finally, the constitution being that of a State of which God was King, the prophets were charged with leading it on to its true consummation, and so they became statesmen. And no land has seen loftier patriotism or profounder political wisdom than these prophets displayed; nor has the love of country ever led to greater sacrifices than were borne by Jeremiah, and Isaiah, and Micah ben Jimlah. I need refer only to the history of these men, and to the interviews between Elijah and Ahab, between Isaiah and Ahaz, between Jeremiah and Zedekiah, to show both the wisdom and the influence which they possessed.

Having thus seen the threefold character of prophetic teaching, we must now proceed to consider the pressure God brought to bear upon the prophets. The Jewish constitution was peculiar in giving, if we may say it, so prominent a place to God in all its departments. God was the head of all,—the head alike of the individual, the Church, and the State. Thus the prophet, God's living mouthpiece, came into contact with the people, both singly and in all the combinations into which they entered. The prophet spake from God to the people. And he spake under pressure,—he was obliged to speak the word of God. As Jeremiah says: "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."[1] Now this has always seemed to me an interesting question. What

[1] Jer. 20^{9}.

kind of feeling was that which the prophets describe when they say, "The word of the Lord came to them"? what kind of feeling was it which they experienced, when under that pressure to speak, which they so often refer to? They were assured that God was calling them, and was speaking in them. Was that state of mind of theirs one that can be identified with any known state of mind among ourselves? They do give the most positive assurances that what they are speaking is from God; and they do distinguish between this and what might have been from themselves, "out of their own heart"; but as to the means by which, or the grounds on which, they make this distinction, they are silent.

On the one hand, it is not likely that the prophets reached a belief in the divinity of the thoughts they gave expression to, by reflecting on them, and seeing their harmony with other divine truth, and their applicability to the present crisis in the nation or Church. This method of testing prophetic utterances by their harmony with the principles of the theocracy was an instrument employed rather by others than by the prophets themselves, though, no doubt, a prophet might have subjected his own thoughts also to such a test. But there is no evidence that any prophet ever proved to himself, by such means as this, that it was the word of God that came to him. But, on the other hand, is there any evidence that the prophet felt that God was speaking to him apart altogether from the word spoken? When God spake to a prophet, was the latter conscious of two things, namely, of the fact that God was speaking, and also of what He spake? When the word of God came to him, did its being the word of God manifest itself to him in some distinctive manner, apart altogether from the contents? Or rather, was not the feeling of the prophet in all probability something like our own,—that double kind of feeling which we express by saying that any opinion we have is *God's truth*?

The question, you will see, is not whether God did originate thoughts in the prophet's mind which, without God's Spirit, he could never have reached, but as to the kind of feeling he had, when such thoughts arose in his mind. Was the divine excitation a thing quite unlike his other mental operations, or so unlike that he knew it immediately as distinct from them? Did his being influenced by God's Spirit give any particular hue to his feeling different from the feeling of the truth of the thought, and from the feeling that it was an important religious truth? I should think there would be no third element in his feeling.

The same question would arise as to the kind of pressure under which the prophet felt himself to be. Did the kind of feeling he had of impulse to speak differ from the feeling men still have of impulse to utter any pressing truth that lies upon them, such men as fervent, religious teachers, or lofty, earnest statesmen? And when truth suddenly dawned upon the prophet's mind, which formerly he strove unsuccessfully to reach by means of reflection, did the feeling he had at such a moment differ from the feeling men still have when, oftentimes in peculiarly spontaneous frames of mind, difficulties are broken up, and problems solved almost involuntarily, which before resisted all conscious and direct efforts of the mind?

On the one hand, certain things might lead us to infer that the divinity of the word, apart from its meaning, made itself distinctively felt. For even things which would, on ordinary principles, be considered opposed to God's will, were felt to be His direct injunctions. Such a case as the command to offer up Isaac illustrates this. But we still see cases quite similar, where men do things contrary to ordinary law under the irresistible impression that they are doing God's will, and following His voice; and nothing more can be inferred from such a case as this of Abraham, than that the revelation carried with it somehow the feeling that it was

from God. Dr. M'Cosh says somewhere that the kind of conviction of truth, which God's revelation carried with it, must be considered similar to the kind of conviction our necessary beliefs carry with them. But it is more likely that the kind of conviction was that, or similar to that, which men have of moral or religious truths such as the existence of God, and such as of His being reconciled to them, and hearing their prayer. For there are many things which show that, while the true prophet was immovably convinced of the truth and divineness of what he uttered, still the grounds of his conviction were peculiar to himself, and could not be communicated, and were of such a kind that men might feel assured falsely, that is, might mistake them.

'Being moved by the Spirit' was not a thing so distinctive but that it might be confused with one's own natural emotions. Probably it had no characteristics by which it could be distinguished from the natural activities of the mind itself. At least this may be said, that though the prophet who was really moved by the Spirit knew certainly that he was so, the prophet who was not so moved might imagine himself to be. Probably the case of the Spirit speaking in the prophet was similar to the case of the Spirit's influence in converting men. Though the true prophet was sure himself of being so, yet the grounds of his assurance, being subjective, could not be formulated so as to prevent a man deceiving himself, and being a sincere false prophet, just as a man may now deceive himself as to his spiritual condition before God. And if a man now interrogates himself regarding his conversion, though he will ascribe it to God, he will not be able to put his finger on any part of the mental process which differs from the natural processes of his mind.

It is quite incredible that the numerous class of prophets who were undoubtedly false were all intentionally so. Con-

sequently, while a man who was a true prophet may have had, from some quarter or other, assurance to himself—assurance of such a kind that no higher could be imagined—of being thus true, yet there was no such immediate proof to a false prophet of his not being true.

Hence the prophets, in the matter of assurance, do not seem to have stood on more fortunate ground than ourselves. The way they were assured was the same way in which we are. The truth carried its own assurance with it. The divine action does not seem anywhere separable from the truth. It is not perceived as distinct in any sphere. We affirm its presence, but we can nowhere lay hold of it as a separate thread of the complex. In other words, we may assert these two things:—(1) Revelation is part of the religious relation of God to His Church; it was in all cases part of the life of the individual, a momentum in the spiritual relations of him and God. When God revealed a new truth in the Old Testament, the process did not differ in its nature from that which happens now, when He reveals to any mind the truths in Scripture. Both are efforts and works of the Holy Spirit; but the Spirit cannot be dissociated from the word, nor His influence felt apart from the word. And (2) the assurance conveyed in both cases was probably the same, an assurance made by the Spirit through the word of its truth. But the process can hardly be analysed further, and the pressure felt to speak could, no doubt, still be paralleled,—it was the sense of duty.

CHAPTER IX.

The Prophetic State.

To be a prophet always implied one of whom the person so named was the prophet,—one ruling and guiding from without. Now the prophetic state, being certainly not ordinary nor yet continuous, would, even though not due to any outward influence, in all probability present such distinctive marks that it could be easily made the subject of investigation. And it might seem that, being due to an external influence, this would make it even more distinctive, and consequently more easily inquired into and estimated. It is doubtful, however, if this last be true. For this outward influence being divine, might rather run the risk of removing the condition out of the region of investigation altogether. Perhaps, however, the influence exerted upon the prophets will be found not to add to the distinctiveness of the prophetic state by its being external, nor to diminish from it by its being divine. What we are going to inquire into is the state of the prophet's mind when receiving or perceiving the prophetic truths, not what it was that put his mind into that state, much less how that which put his mind into that state did so.

Not only shall we be unable to trace how it acted, but perhaps even to trace its action at all,—that is, there will be nothing in the prophetic state regarding which we must say, "This is an effect which only the Spirit of God could have produced." We must content ourselves with a general statement of the connection between the Spirit and the prophetic state.

We shall not be able to locate the Spirit's action, so as to say, for example, that His influence was exerted on the mind so that it was stimulated, and thus rose to higher reaches of truth. In that case the mental excitation would be the means whereby the truth was arrived at, and not conversely, the truth arrived at was the cause of the mental excitation. Neither shall we be able to say that this excitation is of a kind not elsewhere seen in the human mind, and produced by causes not elsewhere in operation. The prophetic condition, being one in which human subjects were the phenomena, must be capable of being described; and so must also the states antecedent to it, and the results which followed it.

The two main names of the prophet were, as we have stated, 'seer' and 'prophet.' The first describes the prophet on the side of his perceiving or receiving the truth,—on his side towards God; the other on the side of his uttering the truth,—his side towards men. It is the side expressed by חֹזֶה that I wish just now to investigate a little. Now, this word חֹזֶה expresses two things, or it has two sides,—one side, God's revealing of the truth; the other, man's receiving of it. Now, man's receiving of the truth is a mental act or mental state. It is this which it is both lawful and necessary to inquire a little into. To the question, What was the prophetic state? three answers have been returned. *First*, that this state did not differ from the natural state; *second*, that it was a condition of complete ecstasy; and *third*, that it was one of comparative ecstasy, that is, of great elevation and excitation. In all probability, since there is such a variety of opinions, they all have some foundation. It may well be that the prophetic state runs through a series of grades, the lowest of which does not differ from the ordinary activity of the mind in thinking, and the highest is such a state of excitation and absorption that it is justly styled ecstatic.

In ordinary thought, one is capable of bringing by an act of will both the operation of the mind, and the subject on

which it is operating, under the eye of the mind by reflection. When the mind is considerably excited, both its operations and the subject on which it is working are less under the control of the will. And in the highest stage of excitation, the reins seem to slip from the hands of the will for a time completely, and the mind careers along a course of activity, directed either by innate tendencies, or by the laws of habitual association. This last state is what we mean by 'ecstasy.' The mind in such conditions is not unconscious of its operations, but merely cannot control them; just as a rider who has lost the reins knows what is going on, but cannot alter it. A man remembers his dreams. But memory of what is past seems to imply consciousness of it when it was present. Yet the dreamer had no power to alter or put an end to his dream; the mind acted, in dreaming, on ways instinctive or habitual. In like manner, in prophetic ecstasy or dreaming the prophet could not control his mind, but he remembered the contents of his vision or dream. What was lost in the highest state of excitation was not consciousness, but the power of reflection, the power or the desire to exercise the will. Thus the prophetic condition may be called a state of reception, if you look at the source whence the truth came to it, or a state of perception, if you look at the mind which reached the truth. It is in this last aspect only that we have at present to regard it.

The prophetic condition was *a state of high mental activity*, going through various grades of intensity, and of that kind of activity called *intuition*. I must therefore draw your attention first to the various grades of the intensity of the mind's activity, as shown in the phenomena of the prophetic state; and then to the kind of activity as shown in the contents of the prophetic visions and utterances. The Old Testament expressly defines the kind of mental operation carried on in the prophetic state, when it says, "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord

will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream."[1] It does not define through what grades of abstraction the mind may go, but it gives many examples of men in the prophetic state, from which we may make an induction of its conditions. The New Testament, on the other hand, does not define the kind of operation, though giving many illustrations of it, but expressly states what relation the will has to it. Now, in the main, Old Testament prophecy and New Testament prophecy are identical; and it will be safest to refer to the statements of the New Testament on the question.

In the New Testament we find among the prophets, Christ Himself, the apostles, a disciple named Agabus, and particularly the members of the Church at Corinth; and we have one prophetic book, the Apocalypse. Christ predicted His own death, from all we can gather, plainly. But the prophecy of the end in Matt. 24 exactly resembles Old Testament prophecy. There is in it the same involution as we find in Joel, for instance, or in Isa. 40^{1-11}. The near and the far are not separated; the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world are both brought close together, just as in Isaiah the release from Babylon by Cyrus and the redemption from sin by the Messiah—the restoration to rest in Palestine and the final glorification of the Church—are combined in one. Hence much doubt has been thrown on Christ's prophecy by New Testament critics, who allege that we do not possess it as it came from Him, but as it was taken up by the disciples, and as it has passed through the mould of apostolic thought. There is no ground for supposing that New Testament prophecy should differ from Old. The similarity to Old Testament prophecy, however, is very remarkable; and as there is no reason to suppose it given to the Lord in vision, or the product of any mental excitation, we are led to infer that what is called 'the timelessness of

[1] Num. 12^{6}.

prophecy,' or what is called otherwise 'the perspective in prophecy,' the close juxtaposition of things distant from one another, when both were also distant from the time or place of the seer, is not due to the fact that prophecies were given in vision.

The other examples of prophecy in the New Testament quite resemble those in the Old. Thus Agabus predicted a dearth, as did Elijah; both, so far as appears, without any excitation. Agabus also used a symbolic action, taking Paul's girdle and binding him in token of his coming bondage, precisely as Jeremiah used his girdle symbolically in making his predictions. And the New Testament prophetic book, the *βιβλίον τῆς προφητείας ταύτης*, resembles in all particulars Old Testament prophecy, being symbolical, tied to its time, using only the elements in the consciousness of the seer, namely, Jerusalem, the Church, Roman heathendom, the persecutions and tribulations already undergone; and the known stadia of the Church's prosperity, namely, the fall of heathendom, the millennial prosperity, and the coming of the Lord. There is much prophecy, but there are few predictions, in the Apocalypse.

Now, the manifest identity of Old and New Testament prophecy making it safe for us to conclude from the one to the other, we find a passage in 1 Cor. 14 defining very particularly the mental condition of the prophet so far as regards his self-control; although, as the passage contemplates the person in the prophetic state being in the company of others, some allowance may need to be made for this. The passage runs (vv.[29-33]): "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of

the saints." From this passage and from the whole chapter these things appear: That the prophetic gift was an element peculiar to Christianity, and extraordinary even in it; that it was the effect of the Spirit; that the utterances were given by revelation, *ἀποκάλυψις*, *i.e.* spiritual intuition; and that the gift, going often along with the gift of tongues, was, if not a more remarkable sign, yet a more useful one, inasmuch as speaking with tongues needed an interpreter who might not be at hand, but prophesying was intelligible to all. Hence the one was a sign, and would convince the unbeliever; the other was a revelation, an unfolding of truth, and edified the Church already believing.

The laws given by the apostle for regulating the gift most concern us, and are these: Some few were to speak, and the others to judge; that is, judge whether what was said was said in the spirit,—to try the spirits. This capacity of judging the utterances of the prophets was common apparently to other prophets, and to others not prophets. Persons who could not themselves prophesy might judge the prophets.

Then, second, when one was speaking, another who had some revelation made to him might suddenly stand up, and the former ought to give place. Two should not speak at once, lest confusion be introduced; but the sudden fresh outbreak of enlightenment was more to be prized than the lengthy, tedious oration. Thus all might prophesy, one by one.

Third, that this order was not one impossible to obey, was evident, for "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." This is the general principle. The *spirits* of the prophets spoken of here are not the gifts as spiritual, nor the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in various ways, thus seeming to be many spirits; but *πνεύματα προφητῶν, prophets' spirits*, are the spirits or minds of the prophets under the apocalyptic influence, and these illuminated spirits under excitation are subject (*ὑποτάσσεται*) to the prophets. The will

is not overborne. The prophets can command themselves, so far at least as to be silent, that is, not to begin speaking; and so far as to become silent, to cease their prophetic utterance, and give way to another. There is no suspension of consciousness or reflection here,—only elevation. The contents of the speech are not their own. Their power is simply *regulative*. It does not appear that the person who stood up, when the other was speaking, was forced to speak or unable to control himself. Certainly he felt a strong impulse to speak; but the apostle allowed him to speak, not from necessity, but because what he was about to say would be more direct from God, fresher and more immediately the product of the apocalypsis. Even the gift of tongues was thus far at least under the control of the speaker,—*if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence.*[1]

From all this we may safely draw the following conclusions: *First*, that much prophetic utterance was made without any excitation, both in the Old Testament and in the New; that this utterance embraced not only the enunciation of general theocratic truths, but also of specific predictions; that the form of the prophetic utterance did not depend on the amount of excitation; and that what is most peculiar in it, its timelessness, did not depend on the method of intuition by which the truth was received. *Second*, that very often a certain amount of excitation accompanied the utterance, or at least the perception, of the prophetic truth. This can be paralleled by the higher activity of mind among ourselves in thought and feeling, especially in high religious or poetical thought. *Third*, that this excitation went through many degrees, and might reach finally to a waking trance. The lower stages of it perhaps were greatly parallel to our states of mental *abstraction*, when, the action of the mind being intense, the senses are less acute, and impressions from without are either fainter or less heeded, so that a certain

[1] 1 Cor. 14^{28}.

unconsciousness of external surroundings ensues. In the higher stages the activity of the mind becomes so intense that it is not only insensible to influences from without, but loses reflective control over its own operations, though not the consciousness of them; and these operations thus go on according to laws which are difficult to define. This is the condition called 'ecstasy.' This state reached such heights that, while the mind never lost self-consciousness, it became so abstracted from bodily and earthly relations that it doubted whether it had been, during its trance, in the body or out of the body, as was the case with Paul. But there seems nothing abnormal in all this. It is only an extreme illustration of the known law, that the mind, when intensely occupied with one thing, can neither attend spontaneously nor be made to attend to another thing, whether the other thing be something outside of it, or its own operations within. *Fourth*, not only the waking trance, but also the sleeping state, could be made the means of revelation, which comprehended both the vision and the dream.

Dreaming is the spontaneous action of the mind in sleep, according to the laws of association, the reflective control of the mind over itself being in general completely lost. When the mental excitation becomes so great that this control is regained, we awake. Often there is an alternation of waking and sleeping,—the waking moments being exceedingly brief. The explanation of dreaming must involve the explanation of sleep, which is partly a question of physiology.

According to recent opinions it is briefly this. The brain is the instrument of the mind. All exercise involves change. This change is waste. The muscles are wasted by exercise, and so are the nerves. To think is also to use the instrument for manifesting thought, the brain. To exercise it is to waste it. By much exercise it becomes wearied; by excessive exercise it becomes exhausted. Its substance is consumed. The condition of waste is a certain element supplied by the

blood. When this element is exhausted or not supplied, the condition of change is absent. There is no alteration in the substance of the brain. It is in a state of quiescence. This quiescence is sleep. The mind may not sleep, but without an instrument it does not manifest itself. Dreaming arises from imperfect quiescence of the brain. It is supposed to arise, not when the whole brain is imperfectly quiescent, but when some part of it is quiescent, and some part active. The mind has then only a partial instrument. Hence the imperfect manifestation of the laws of mind in dreaming.

Dreams are usually the irregular continuation of trains of thought in the previous waking state which have not been completely broken off, because the dreamer has not gone completely to sleep; or they are caused by disturbances reaching the mind through the senses. These, being imperfectly perceived, give rise to irregular action of the mind, and issue in abnormal and sometimes monstrous combinations, owing to the associative faculty being quite free from the control of the will. But the main thing which I desire to establish is that the prophetic state is a condition of mental activity, and that this activity does not differ in its phenomena from the same kinds of mental activity in other men.

Now, I may add a few illustrations to show that the prophetic state, though always one of great mental activity, was sometimes quite under the power of the reflection and the will, and sometimes was accompanied with great excitation and comparative loss of this power. It is certainly true that there were prophets in whom no excitement prevailed, who spoke always calmly and with clear consciousness and composure; and their words are likewise the purest truths. And it is to be supposed that all the prophets sometimes spoke as well as perceived their prophetic truths in this unexalted state. The greatest prophet of the Old Testament received from Heaven communications in his

ordinary waking condition, speaking with God face to face as a man speaketh with his friend. This perhaps refers to his method of perception through his outward senses, as in the mount. And as Moses received the divine word without perturbation, so he uttered it in all composure and serene calmness. In like manner the great Prophet of the New Testament—the Prophet like unto Moses, who united in Himself the ideal elements of a prophet, and is to be taken as the type of the class—always spoke calmly and with no excitement, enunciating His great principles with an unruffled dignity, and throwing His eye into the future with no tumult of spirit. Hence the very ideal of prophecy is to receive the divine communication unperturbed by the nearness of the divine, and to deliver it with a calm confidence in its truthfulness and its certainty to prevail.

But perhaps such perfection could not be abidingly reached in an imperfect dispensation like that of the Old Testament. The Spirit's abode in the prophets was intermittent and irregular. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."[1] Only earnests of His fulness were received, strange, fearful, sudden, and violent. But this is evident, the worse prepared in general the prophet was, the less illuminated and subdued his sinful nature was, the stronger were the convulsions into which the Spirit threw him. Thus in Saul, a character not wholly bad, but with the elements of a noble nature in him, these never united into harmonious activity, but were always rent and kept asunder by some suspicion, or vice, or self-will, ending at times in complete madness. When the Spirit came on him, it raised the wildest tumult in his breast, warring with incongruous elements there; and he was thrown down by the violence of the struggle, and lay all night on the ground and prophesied. In later prophets, such as Ezekiel and Daniel, we have to distinguish between the state of

[1] John 7^{39}.

prophetic excitement itself, either during the perception of the vision or during its delivery, and the consequent effect the vision had on the prophet. Thus Daniel recounts how after a vision "he was left alone, and there remained no strength in him";[1] and how "he fainted, and was sick certain days; and was astonished at the vision, and none understood it."[2] Here the fainting and sickness were not elements of the prophetic state, but consequences of the awful nature of the prophetic revelation. This sickness would be the result either of the reaction of the mind from excessive terror on the bodily system, or the consequence of that abnormal and disordered bodily condition into which the prophet passed in the state of extreme ecstasy.

Again, we must be careful to distinguish between what really took place in the prophet's mind or body, and what were elements of the vision itself, and only seemed to take place. It is not uncommon for a man to dream that something already dreamed was a dream,—to have a dream within a dream. Whether such a thing implies a momentary state of wakefulness and reflection immediately overpowered again by sleep, and the half-begun process of thinking prolonged in the new state of sleep, may be difficult to say. The prophets seem, too, to have had visions within visions. We dream of some occurrence, and we are logical in our dreams; for we dream that the effects follow from it that would have followed, had the occurrence really happened. And in a similar way the prophets saw great sights from above, and they saw their own natures faint before such awful revelations. Thus Ezekiel writes: "I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the Lord stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face. Then the Spirit entered into me, and set me on my feet."[3] Both this falling down and setting up must, I think, be visionary. Again: "So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and

[1] Dan. 10^{8}. [2] Dan. 8^{27}, cf. $7^{15.28}$. [3] Ezek. 3^{23}.

I came to them of the captivity," etc.[1] In like manner Daniel says: "So he came near where I stood: and when he came near, I was afraid, and fell on my face. And as he was speaking with me, I was in deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me and set me upright."[2]

It is difficult in such cases to decide what elements of the narrative must have been seen only in the vision, and what elements really took place. These bodily effects may very easily have followed from the vision. But it is more probable, from other passages, that they were elements of the vision itself. Thus Ezekiel writes: "And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate."[3] Hosea was bidden marry an adulterous woman. Jeremiah was bidden hide his girdle by the Euphrates. Ezekiel was bidden lie three hundred and ninety days on one side and forty on the other, etc. Now these things must have been transacted in vision only. From all this, however, it is quite evident that the prophets of the Old Testament did not perceive prophetic truth at all times free of excitation. Only He in whom the Spirit dwelt in His fulness so perceived and so spake; and to a great extent also His apostles, and Moses, the founder of the former dispensation. Excitement is the result of unpreparedness, of elements in the nature as yet unsubdued by the Spirit, of want of habitude, of intermission. And its presence was to be looked for in a preparatory dispensation.

On the other hand, the opinion that the prophetic state was one of complete ecstasy cannot be sustained, if by complete ecstasy is meant a merely mechanical use of the prophet by the Spirit. Indeed, it is difficult to understand the meaning of a mechanical use of the mind. Another person can use your hand to strike. Could another use your

[1] Ezek. 3^{14}. [2] Dan. 8^{17}. [3] Ezek. 8^{3}.

mind to think? At any rate, to dream is a mental operation of the dreamer; to see a vision is a mental process of the seer; to speak intelligently is both a mental and a physical operation of the speaker. To remember so as to be able to reproduce, in waking or discussive states, the contents of a dream or a vision, seems to imply the consciousness of the thing dreamed or seen at the time. And all this conduces to disprove any merely mechanical use of the prophet by the Spirit. Here are all the indications which we ever have of that use and operation of the mind which is ordinary and rational,—it must be quite false, surely, to call it also mechanical. Indeed, the miraculous does not supersede, but employs, the existing. The supernatural usually consists in a certain usage of the natural. And that the human mind was rationally active — to use an expression somewhat tautological—in the prophetic state, appears not only from the products of the state when it was ended, and from the phenomena of the state while it continued, but particularly from certain preparatives that were in use to induce the state.

These preparatives were of a kind auxiliary to intense mental activity. They tended to remove disturbances, to compose and concentrate the mind, and at the same time to withdraw it from too close relation with the outside world, and to give it a higher tone within. One of the most common of these preparatives was *music*. Thus Elisha, when asked by Jehoshaphat to give him some indications of the issue of his campaign against Moab and Edom, had recourse to music as a preliminary preparation: "And now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him. And he said, Thus saith the Lord," etc.[3] And so in the well-known passage in the history of Saul, Samuel describes to him the band of young prophets who should meet him "coming down from the high place with

[1] 2 Kings 3^{15}.

a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: and the Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy, and shalt be turned into another man."[1] And in a remarkable passage in 1 Chron. 25[1] Asaph and some of his followers are called 'prophets upon harps,' and in v.[2] they are called 'seers.' The use of music could not be to destroy or disorganise the mind, but rather to calm it and elevate it into a region above that of ordinary feeling and life.

A very curious fact has been pointed out, namely, that the prophets of the later time usually had their trances in the vicinity of rivers, the murmur of which acted like music and soothed the spirit; as you remember the great Roman patron of learning, in his excessive nervousness, found sleep only within a certain distance from falling waters. Ezekiel was by the river Chebar when he beheld the vision of the cherubim.[2] Daniel likewise had visions by the side of the great river, the river Hiddekel;[3] and he also speaks of being by the river Ulai.[4] In complete accordance with all this, is the circumstance that prophetic visions were usually perceived in the darkness of night, — not in sleep, for then they would be dreams, but in a waking condition, yet surrounded with darkness. There is less to distract in the night,—the soul has greater power of self-abstraction, when the sights and sounds of the world that continually claim its attention move away and die down. Eliphaz saw his vision in the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men.[5] That splendid series of visions in Zech. 1–6, running through the history of the Church till its time of universal power, was seen in one night. Nathan received his reply to David's proposal to build an house to the Lord, in the night: "and it came to pass that night."[6] In like manner, Balaam waited till night till he could answer the king of Moab;[7] and the

[1] 1 Sam. 10^5. [2] Ezek. 1^3. [3] Dan. 10^4. [4] Dan. 8^2.
[5] Job 4. [6] 2 Sam. 7. [7] Num. $22^{8, 19}$.

young Samuel first learned to know the voice of the Lord in the stillness of the night.[1] Here, also, may be mentioned all those passages in the Psalms, where spiritual instruction is referred to as coming in the night, as for instance:

"I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel:
Yea, my reins instruct me in the night seasons."[2]

And to corroborate all this, only one other thing need be referred to. It was said in Latin: *aut insanit aut versus facit;* and a similar idea is seen in Hebrew, where the same word meant both *to prophesy* and *to be mad.* When Elisha went to the camp and anointed Jehu the son of Nimshi king, his soldier comrades, on seeing the uncouth visitor depart, at once asked Jehu, "Whence came this mad fellow to thee?" This word מְשֻׁגָּע was still retained even in the days of Jeremiah,[3] as a synonym for מִתְנַבֵּא.

These things, therefore, have been conclusively shown: *First,* that the prophetic state was a condition of real mental activity, and nothing mechanical or merely seeming. *Second,* that this activity went through various grades of intensity,—similar to, or rather identical with, what we perceive in all ages among men. *Third,* this identity of operation must be inferred from identity of phenomena. And, *fourth,* this does not supersede the divine, but it may prevent us defining in what the divine consisted, as for example calling it *suggestion* and such like. And it may also prevent us locating the action of the divine, so as to name it, for instance, dynamical, because we consider it an influence exerted on the mind so as to stimulate it to think, rather than materials of thought suggested to it. If the operations of the mind during the prophetic state show that the mind was really operating mentally, and was not influenced mechanically, the immediately antecedent operations of the mind and the connection between them and the prophetic state may equally

[1] 1 Sam. 3. [2] Ps. 16^{7}. [3] Jer. 29^{26}.

debar us from saying that the influence brought to bear was dynamical. There was a connection between the Spirit of God and the mind of the prophet, but the connection was miraculous, and so evades definition. What is capable of definition only is the condition of the prophet.

And, so far as we can see, all the mental operations of the prophet antecedent to the prophetic state, and during it and after it, are *as if* no influence of the Spirit had been exerted on him. There is no doubt that the prophetic state is called, *e.g.*, in the Apocalypse, being *in the Spirit*, ἐν πνεύματι; though that rather seems to refer to the human spirit, indicating a predominance of the πνεῦμα over the sense-spheres of the activity; and it is also said that the hand of the Lord was upon the prophets, and His Spirit fell on them, and so on,—modes of expression used to define the prophetic or ecstatic state. But it is doubtful how far we are entitled to argue rigidly on such language, so as to infer that the ecstatic state was produced by the Spirit, and not rather that the Spirit used this state for His purposes. For we found that the prophets consciously used means to induce the state, that it might then be the vehicle for conveying from the Spirit the prophetic word.

This question has a very interesting history in the Church. Various opinions have been expressed regarding it at various times. The true state of the question should always, in discussing it, be held before the mind, lest we should seem, in speaking of it, to be calling in question things about which there is no question. The question is not one concerning the truths which the prophets uttered, whether these be divine truths or no, or whether they were not rather reached through conditions of the human mind, peculiar no doubt, but still human, and observable more or less among all the nations of antiquity, and even still observable to some extent in modern times. That is not the question. The truth reached by the prophet is the truth then taught him

by the Spirit,—as they always say, "Thus saith the Lord." The question is as to that condition of the human mind in which it reached the truth, or in which it was, when receiving the truth; how far it is a condition of mind definable; how far it may resemble other conditions of mind with which in the history of mankind we are more or less familiar,—not, as I have said, whether the Spirit of revelation was there present at all, but, being present, with what peculiar states of the human mind He allied Himself, or employed so as to effect a communication between Himself and mankind. It has been already shown that prophecy was a popular institution, that it fed itself out of the people as a whole, and that it used for its purposes the religious methods, the elements of the religious consciousness, and the forms of that consciousness, then prevailing. It did not, however, leave them in their former crude and unenlightened condition, but purified them from what was superstitious in them, and from what had a tendency to impurity. It used the methods and forms then existing for its own high purposes.

Now, no doubt, the vision or partial ecstasy or elevated condition of the phantasy, or intuitive faculty, was such a form common in those early times. It was a thing congenial to the genius of the Oriental people among whom revelation was then being manifested. It was a form suitable to that early age. And it is a happy thing for us that it was; for thus the Scriptures have been given to us, not in cold abstract formulas fitted only to move philosophic minds, but in concrete forms of human feeling and life, full of human circumstances, and resplendent with the hues thrown over them by the emotional nature of mankind. And it was a form not only natural to that people of intense feeling on all occasions, but especially natural when truth was new, when great conceptions as to the relations of God and man, and as to man's duty in lofty moments of personal responsibility or national trial, were for the first time breaking in upon the

human mind. All these circumstances and considerations make it probable that much excitement, not always, of course, of the same grade, but of many grades, will accompany the revelation to the mind of such truths. And it is to be presumed that, as the gift of prophecy became more regular, and acquired more and more the stable character of an institution among the people, such accompaniments of revelation in the mind would gradually disappear. And the same effect would follow from the gradual accumulation of religious truths. These were no longer altogether new. Men's minds were familiar with them. As fundamental verities, they had entered into the general consciousness of the nation. What was new was generally only the application of them to the particular crisis of the individual's life or the nation's history. But this was always new. And no prophetic truth uttered by any prophet has ever attained to the rank of a philosophic maxim, or a cold deduction from prior truths. The prophet never comes before men inferring. The truth he utters is always a novelty to him to such an extent that he feels it to be an immediate communication from God.

Now, these things being premised, we are free to look at the question of the state of the prophet's mind as a psychological question regarding a state in which human minds may be. We shall therefore refer briefly to the history of this question.

1. The opinion expressed by Philo on the subject of the prophetic ecstasy agrees more with Platonic ideas on that subject than with the Old Testament. According to him, the prophet is the interpreter of God, who makes him inwardly perceive what he is to speak. This divine inspiration is received by the prophet in a state of *ekstasis* in which his self-consciousness is entirely in abeyance,—the human νοῦς has departed to give place to the divine Spirit or πνεῦμα; for, as Philo expresses it, if the divine light is to arise, the human mind must sink. Thus the man is no more himself;

he is possessed. The human Ego sinks and loses itself altogether in the divine. Philo adds that this capacity which all men possess is grounded on the relation of the human to the divine, and thus any one may be a prophet.

This view of Philo, or at least a view akin to it, was adopted in the early Christian Church. The early apologists use various figures to express their idea of what the prophetic inspiration was like. The divine Spirit that moved the prophets used them as a flute-player does his flute,—they were wholly passive, even inanimate, and had only to subject themselves to the Spirit, which, as a divine plectrum, struck them like a harp or lute, and thus revealed to men divine sounds.

2. This may be supposed to have been the prevailing view, so far as we find expression given to any view, down to the time of Tertullian and the Montanists. The extravagances of this sect and their prophetic manifestations caused a revulsion in the mind of the Church, and a return to a sounder view, although perhaps this revulsion, as was natural, became in some cases excessive in another direction. The Church Fathers of that time declared all convulsions which repressed the rational consciousness unworthy of true prophecy, and only suitable to the manticism produced by demoniacal powers. Origen, for instance, maintains that during the influence of the Holy Spirit experienced by the prophet, the will and the judgment remain in their normal activity, and that the removal of every obscuration of the understanding is a token that a better spirit is animating the soul. Jerome especially insists that the unconscious ecstasy is inconsistent with the saying of St. Paul, that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. Frail human nature, he remarks, could not endure an uninterrupted state of ecstasy. And in this respect we discern the essential difference between the prophets and Christ, in whom the Spirit abode permanently.

3. This sound and reasonable view continued to prevail

in the Church, particularly in the Protestant Church, till a new interest was awakened in the subject of prophecy by the fresh investigations into Old Testament questions in the beginning of this century. Amidst various conflicting opinions, Hengstenberg, in the first edition of his *Christology*, reverted to the early position of the Church, that the prophetic state was one of complete ecstasy. The intelligent consciousness retreated, and the will-power, being suppressed by a powerful operation of the divine Spirit, was reduced to a state of passivity. The prophets were then, however, exalted to a higher region, because not only the intelligent consciousness but the lower psychical life retreated; and they were thus fitted to receive, like an unsullied mirror, impressions of divine truth. The lively reclamations directed from all sides of the Church against this revival by Hengstenberg of the extreme view that obtained in the early Church, induced that theologian to recede from the position he had taken up; and in the second edition of his *Christology* he returns, in all important particulars, to the view prevalent before his time, although he still continued to emphasise more than had been formerly done the elevation or comparative ecstasy which the prophets in many cases experienced. In this respect the exaggeration of his former view produced a beneficial result, and recalled men's minds to facts in the history of prophecy, particularly in its early condition, which were liable to be forgotten. There is no doubt that, in the earlier forms of prophecy, this ecstatic condition was so much one of the constant elements of it, that it gave name both to the person, namely, *seer*, and to the result, namely, *vision*,— names which continued to be applied long after this ecstatic condition had ceased to accompany the exercise of the prophetic faculty.

In later times, as prophecy declined, there seems to have been a revival of the vision, as in the case of Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel. There is no good ground for supposing

that their visions were not actual experiences, but only literary imitations of a more ancient method. It is quite possible that there may be some instances of this, particularly when prophecy, from being the exercise of the gift of public speech, had become in some measure a literary occupation, or an imitation of ancient forms. But this will not account for the new outburst of the vision, the explanation of which is to be sought for, partly in the idiosyncrasies of the individual prophets, partly in the more agitating circumstances of the times in which they lived, and partly, perhaps, in the increasing rarity of the prophetic gift in the declining condition and amidst the expiring energies of the nation. All these things conspired to throw prophecy back into that primitive and more extraordinary condition in which we observe it in the early ages of the theocracy.

Now, in the prophetic state the condition of the prophet's mind was plainly one of activity. How, then, did the mind act when in that state? This can only be ascertained from an examination of the expressions used by the prophets to describe the state, or at least to describe what it seemed to them they were doing mentally, when in that state. It will be best, therefore, to begin with the extreme illustration of the prophetic state, namely, the dream. Dreams were not common among the prophets. The dream, as a state of revelation, was chiefly witnessed outside the people of Israel. Pharaoh dreamed; his butler and his baker dreamed. So did Nebuchadnezzar and Pilate's wife. When the dream appeared within Israel, it was chiefly in the case of those who were not prophets. Thus Jacob dreamed on his way to Paddan-aram. Joseph dreamed; and among the prophets Daniel also dreamed. But Daniel is not placed among the prophets in the Old Testament. He was a courtier in a heathen palace, and the sphere of his activity was Babylon. Prophecy in his time took quite a new turn. It looked out from heathenism in

upon Israel: hitherto it had looked out of Israel upon heathenism. The developments of heathenism form the subject of Daniel: those of Israel, the subject of the other prophets.

Now, we are all familiar with dreaming. We know what that kind of mental activity is which we so name. It is a kind of perception. We do not so much think as *see*. Indeed, it may be questioned if there is any thought without the feeling of perception. Most men think in images derived from sight. But men born blind think in images derived from touch. We think in words to such a degree that many people cannot think without thinking aloud. A train of mathematical reasoning might be carried on in a dream; but, no doubt, the figures would be quite as much present to the mind of the dreamer as if his eyes were open. And such was the prophetic condition. The prophets who dreamt *saw*.

The next lower stage of the prophetic state was the vision, which in early times was the ordinary prophetic condition; and, no doubt, the same principles apply to it. It probably differed from the dream only in degree. The kind of mental activity was the same. And whatever other degrees of the state there were, they were all conditions of perception, of intuition. We cannot enter into any discussion of the nature of this mental condition in itself. It is sufficient for our purpose to identify it with what we are ourselves familiar with. And it would be equally out of place to inquire whether the Oriental mind be not one that naturally assumes this condition to a much greater degree than the more ratiocinative Western mind; or whether the condition be not one especially usual in primitive states of society, and in the early conditions of humanity. These are all interesting questions relating to how far God beforehand made natural predispositions for a future intended supernatural purpose. But the immediately interesting

question for us is the state itself, and what consequences it may carry as to the form of prophecy, and the principle of its interpretation.

Now, the prophets always describe the state as *seeing*; and the name 'seer' became in early times the common appellation of the prophet. We must hold that the word was used with all the latitude with which we employ the word 'see.' It is quite false to restrict it to what we technically call a 'vision.' The word is generic, and runs through all grades of visual perception. What the prophet saw—the contents of his vision—was called חָזוֹן or חִזָּיוֹן or חָזוּת. Occasionally another sense, that of *hearing*, seemed to them the avenue through which the revelation came, as in Isa. $50^{4.5}$: "He wakeneth mine ear to hear"; "Jehovah hath opened mine ear." Hence also the frequent formula: 'Thus saith the Lord,' lit. 'Thus is the whisper of Jehovah.' This, however, is chiefly the case when the revelation comes as abstract formulas of truth, and embodies itself less in concrete realisations. We even find the combination: "The *words* of Amos which he *saw*."

Two questions consequently arise: (1) whence came the materials that constituted the visions, or at least the basis of them? and (2) in what way will this affect our interpretation of the prophecies, as we now possess them?

To the first question we must answer that the elements of the prophetic visions were drawn partly from the mind of the seer, partly from the circumstances about him, and partly from revelation from God. The mind of the seer seemed often to contribute the form, the circumstances the main contents, and the revelation some of the highest reaches of the vision. In general, however, while all three are to be traced, we cannot separate them, or assign distinct elements to each. But both the form and the contents generally reflect at once the mental idiosyncrasies of the seer and his historical position; and where we cannot

trace this reflection, we may assume that it is present though undetected. Thus Pharaoh's dream had in it the most prominent features of the land of Egypt, the river, the reeds, cattle, corn, etc. So Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the colossal man seemed but the projection into a figure of his great day-dreams of a universal, homogeneous empire, with all the unity and articulations of the human body. Jacob's dream was, no doubt, suggested by his loneliness and his need of some helper, and by the stair-like sloping to heaven of the hilly land where he lay down to sleep. And so the elements of the visions of Ezekiel and Daniel were furnished by the wonderful symbolism of Babylonia and Persia.

This being the general principle, I shall now refer to three or four cases as illustrating the kind of elements that might enter into the vision. First, then, Peter's vision [1] of the sheet filled with all manner of creatures, and the words he heard regarding their cleanness, suggesting to him the great moral truth of the equality in God's sight of all men, and His purpose to save all. The moral preparations for this vision, if any, are concealed. Peter may, ere this, have speculated on a wider purpose of God, and on the temporariness of the old dispensation, and on what might be involved in its passing away. And events going on about him may have raised many thoughts as to whereunto these things would grow. But if so, these thoughts remain unexpressed. The immediate connections of the vision are with antecedent physical states. The ordinary bodily conditions of hunger formed the direct preparation. God linked His revelation of the most vital truth of Christianity, in Peter's case, to the most elementary craving of human nature. No doubt we can fancy how the mind, stimulated by the appetite, might easily bring within its sweep all the materials of food, things clean and unclean, and speedily pass to asking why the eating of some should be prohibited and the eating of others per-

[1] Acts 10.

mitted, and then be seized with the desire, if only it were lawful, to enjoy any of them meantime. Thus a channel would be quite naturally cut for the influx of the higher truth implied in the symbolical meaning of this prohibition, and its parallel among men in Jews and Gentiles. The phenomena in the vision, the command, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat," and the negative answer, seem not unlike the faint reflex of the operations of a fierce and indiscriminate appetite, controlled in the previous waking state by considerations of law.

This case is very illustrative of the kind of path by which the prophets might reach the visionary state, and the kind of elements that the vision would contain. We may feel warranted, therefore, to conclude that any bodily state or any mental emotion may lead on to the prophetic state, and give to it its main colour. But there was, in addition to all this, a real supernatural element in the vision, a revelation of a truth from God, to which manifestly Peter had not attained in his waking state,—a truth which, even if the mental process had gone on which I have supposed, he had previously rejected or failed to reach. To Peter's own mind there must have been, in this vision, something which convinced him that it was widely different from an ordinary dream or reverie. It forced itself in upon his mind that this vision was from God, and that, too, with a power which governed his whole after life, except, perhaps, for a short time at Antioch; though even his conduct there was not due to an alteration in his convictions, but to a fear which made him suppress them.

I may cite as a second case one very different, Isaiah's inaugural vision, chap. 6. This vision is certainly a fairer type than the last, although it perhaps is, in its own way, as great an extreme. The elements it embodies are certain thoughts of God,—particularly His holiness and

sovereignty; certain symbolical presentations of God in Israel, *e.g.* His dwelling-place in the temple; certain moral conditions of Israel, namely, those of the time; and, finally, the necessary result of the relations of a holy God and King to such moral conditions,—the complete dissolution and exile of the people; and yet again the inbreaking of another fundamental theocratic truth, namely, the inviolability of the covenant relation of Jehovah to Israel, and the consequent indestructibility of Israel, in which remained a holy seed. It will not in the least alter our opinion of the meaning and influence of this vision, or crisis in the prophet's career, that we suppose the prominent thoughts of it to be thoughts and views long familiar to the prophet, often recurring to him, and, as he grew up to fuller powers and reflected more deeply on the times and their tendencies, gradually coming to affect him more strongly, and growing into steady convictions, that increased in the power with which they held and moved him, till at last they presented themselves all at once in their full brilliancy and connection, and in a way so overpowering that the prophet was unable longer to rest in silence, but must go forth and proclaim them among his people.

Most probably, this was just the process that led to the vision, so far as it took place on a natural platform. For were these things as Isaiah saw them? Was his vision of God true? Was his view of the tendencies and issues of the nation correct? If they were, surely they were not now seen and observed for the first time. Certainly Isaiah had often thought of God so before. No doubt also the tendencies of the society of his time were patent on the face of it, and had often appeared to him in the same light. But now, under some more than natural influence, all these truths, unconnected in his mind and strewn about loosely, took a shape, and a clearness, and a connection, and assumed a power over him, which he could

not withstand. But the pathway which led into the vision, and the contents of the vision itself, and the effects upon the prophet's activity of what he saw, may to some extent be made matter of observation. It is evident that the naked religious principles of the vision were given to the prophet already in the theocratic constitution, that the clothing of them was given either in the theocratic institutions, or in the state of society; and that the new revelation was a combination of elements in that already possessed, namely, the necessary dissolution of the present theocracy, and its reconstruction on a new and wider basis.

A third and rather instructive example may be found in the prophecy in Isa. 2 concerning the mountain of the Lord in the last days. That prophecy itself is an example of the imaginative faculty in the prophet. He has constructed a new condition of things. The mountain of the Lord is seen by him established on the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; and all nations are flowing to it. In his vision this new state of things presented itself to him. But, further, it is certain that Isaiah is not the original author of the prophecy. It is common to him and Micah. Its position in Micah may be original, though it is not unnatural to suppose that he too has drawn it from some other quarter. And yet, though not original to Isaiah, he introduces it, and what follows in connection with it, thus: "The word which Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." Thus these two additional principles may be assumed. Truth given to the mind of the prophet in quotations from his predecessors may lead the way to his visions, and form an element in them. And in the prophetic state the mind not only exercises its presentative or reproductive power, but also its constructive or creative power.

Once more, a very common preparation for the prophetic state was prayer. Indeed, it seems quite probable that in very many, perhaps in most cases, the prophetic abstrac-

tion did not rise higher than it did, or does, in very earnest prayer. It is remarkable that the word ענה is used to express both the prophetic enlightenment and the answer to prayer. In the Psalms, moreover, we frequently find the suppliant passing suddenly over from a condition of despondent but earnest petitioning to one of enlightenment and hope: "Now know I that Jehovah saveth His anointed."[1] Almost all the Psalms that begin with petitions end with the expression of assurance,—the suppliant being answered even while speaking. And only to mention a single case among the prophets, that great prophecy of the seventy weeks in Dan. 9 was given in answer to such prayer: "I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications. . . . And while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel touched me," and so on. This illustrates a truth which is, though very plain, very needful to be pondered, namely, the ethical relation of the prophets to God.

No doubt the all-pervasive Spirit of God can press any instrument into His service, making to utter words of prophecy a character only half good like Saul, or one wholly covetous like Balaam, or one completely envious and cruel like Caiaphas. Still, these extreme cases are but examples of what God may accomplish, not examples of His usual method. It is the teaching of the Old Testament as well as of the New, of Isaiah's vision and Peter's Epistle "that holy men spake from God, moved by the Holy Ghost." Perhaps from all this it may be inferred that the prophets exhibited every kind of mental activity that men usually exhibit, and that the same things contributed to their activity that usually contribute to mental activity among men, and that their mental activity produced results similar to those still produced,—so that, while we name the prophecies which they uttered divine, we must also call them perfectly human.

Now, if we look for a moment at the second question,

[1] Ps. 20^{6}.

namely, what form the prophecies will assume in such circumstances, we shall find it necessary to make some such definition of the prophecies as this: They will be truth given in terms of the Old Testament dispensation, and in a form chiefly figurative. The figurative element will arise from the method of receiving them, namely, perception, seeing. The terms in which they are given will arise from the circumstances of the prophet.

Thus the permanent truths will be those embodied in permanent Old Testament institutions and general theocratic principles; the permanent clothing will also be derived from these institutions. The advancing and altering truths will be those embodied in the progressive history and varying conditions of the people, and the many-coloured dress will be derived from this changeful history. Of course, also, permanent truths may be presented in the many-coloured garb woven by history. Added to all this, the prophet's own imaginative mind will often present the truth in a dress the elements of which may be borrowed from institution or history, but which itself is altogether the work of the poet's fancy. Thus, to draw together these remarks, there is in prophecy, *first*, a poetical element; *second*, and more largely, a figurative element, the prophetic truth being usually presented in a concrete shape; *third*, the elements out of which this concrete is composed are the theocratic institutions and the theocratic history in its successive stages, so that the figurative varies very largely in different prophetic epochs.

CHAPTER X.

The Source of Prophecy—Inspiration.

The word 'prophet' (נָבִיא) certainly, according to its usage, and most probably also, as we have seen, according to its derivation, suggests the source of the prophetic communication,—a prophet is one who speaks from God. This is what distinguishes a true from a false prophet. The one speaks from God; the other speaks out of his own heart. More explicitly still, the prophet is one who speaks by the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament a prophet is named 'a man of the spirit'; and in the New, "Prophets are men who speak from God, moved by the Holy Ghost." The *differentia* of Hebrew prophecy is this: that Jehovah by His Spirit spoke immediately to the *mind* of the prophet without the intervention of any other means. This distinguishes it from heathen prophesying or divination, which sought to reach the divine will or meaning through external appliances, such as lots, arrows, rods, etc. Undoubtedly there were persons among the Canaanitish nations called 'prophets,' just as in Israel. These certainly had this in common with the Hebrew prophets, that they were, or thought themselves to be, prophets of deities. My impression is that the resemblance between them ends there, and that there was nothing in common between their methods and objects and those of Israel's prophets.

Hebrew prophecy is so distinctively the effect of the Spirit, that this general manifestation, in its various kinds, is named as embracing the whole outcome of the Spirit's influence in the New Dispensation.

"And it shall be in the last days, saith God,
I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh:
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
And your old men shall dream dreams,
And your young men shall see visions."[1]

This method of inspiration is the chief of the 'divers manners' in which God aforetime spake unto the fathers. Of course, it was not the only way. There are in the Old Testament various kinds of supernatural revelation, and, like all other things in the Old Testament, they are historical and successive; and though, perhaps, like the epochs in creation, they do not terminate abruptly, but slide imperceptibly into one another, and sometimes, when we are quite in another epoch, we are surprised by the remains of a former one, or meet unexpectedly the beginnings of one about to ensue; yet the periods themselves, if not their extremities, are sufficiently well marked to be recognised as distinct.

Perhaps these periods are no more than three: the first reaching to the Fall; the second from the Fall to Moses; and the third from Moses to Christ. As to the last two there need not be much dispute, though there may be some as to the first. Taking them backwards, we find that the period from Moses to Christ is distinguished as the period of revelation by means of *inward Prophetic Inspiration*, during which God spake *in* men by means of His Spirit. The second period, from Moses back to Adam, is the period of revelation by means of Outward Manifestations and Symbols and Theophanies, during which God spake to men through their senses, in physical phenomena, as the burning bush, the cloudy pillar, or in sensuous forms, as men, angels, etc. As to the first, the period preceding the Fall, very little is said or known about it. But from the indications in Gen. 2 it must have been a period of supernatural revelation as much as any that followed it, and,

[1] Joel 3^{1}, Acts 2^{17}.

indeed, more directly than either of them. It seems to have possessed the characteristics of both the second and the third. It was outward, like the second: "And Jehovah God took the man, and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it; and Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; and Jehovah God brought the beasts to Adam to see what he would call them." Plainly enough, the Bible regards all these as real transactions done outwardly, no less outwardly and in no other way than the manifestations of God after the Fall, when the man and his wife heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden, and they hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah God among the trees of the garden. And besides being outward, as in the second period, it was a real manifestation of God Himself, though not by His Spirit, as in the third period.

The very obscurest indications of what took place in this period are of extreme importance, both in regard to the Scripture doctrine of the supernatural, and in regard to a kind of speculation not strictly scriptural. If, as seems to be implied, this intercourse of God with man in the garden was sensuous, and thus what we call supernatural, this shows that the introduction of the supernatural was not caused by sin, but that God intended to hold intercourse with His spiritual creature, man, in other ways than those which we commonly call natural; that He meant to communicate with him otherwise than through nature and reason, separately or acting on one another. Thus sin was not the occasion of the introduction of God's supernatural teaching of man, though it may have modified it, and perhaps greatly extended its necessity.

On the other hand, if we had any certainty as to the form in which God appeared to Adam in Paradise, this might be of use in carrying on some speculations in a region into which Scripture does not enter. In the second period the Theophanies were very frequently in human form. It has been

generally held that God who appeared to the fathers was the Son, who is the revealed God, according to His own declaration: "No man has seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son has declared Him." According to the same way of interpreting the Old Testament, current among the apostles, John says of the 6th chapter of Isaiah: "These things said Isaiah, because he saw His glory; and he spake of Him."[1] It has also been generally held that these appearances of God in human form were premonitions of the incarnation,—a brief tabernacling of God in the form of man, to raise in men's hearts the thought of such a thing, and awaken in them the longing for it; and to cause them to have some reasonable ground for hoping for it, seeing that form was one which God had taken, and was thus not incapable of taking; a form which He took, when he brought Himself most near to man, and which, therefore, He might be expected to take, when He came to dwell altogether among them.

Now, if this kind of inference be just, and if there were good ground for believing that God appeared to Adam even before the Fall in the form of man, there would be some reason to conclude that an Incarnation would have come about, even apart from the fact of sin. Such a speculation as this, though warmly pursued by many theologians abroad and among the Schoolmen, and though of extreme interest, does not strictly come before us here. It is not a Biblical doctrine. Certainly not directly; and it is to be doubted if the things in Scripture which are employed as a basis on which to raise it, can be justly so used. It is rather the product of that Determinism in theological thinking, according to which whatever has come about must have happened. This kind of principle, according to which God develops Himself by an inward necessity, is certainly not a Biblical principle, least of all an Old Testament principle. There all God's actions appear as the result of the most perfect, even

[1] John 12^{41}.

sometimes almost arbitrary, freedom of will. The other may be a legitimate method of thinking, and to many minds even necessary. And while no one ought to be denied the privilege, or the right, if you choose, of indulging it, I think it is fair to remark, first, that it is not the Biblical method, which proceeds upon the assumption that God does all things freely; secondly, that it is an illegitimate use of the other method, if it refuses place to the Biblical method as equally well based with itself on a true idea of God, and practically the only true method; and, thirdly, that it is especially an illegitimate use of the method, if it be applied only to some things, such as the Incarnation. It is a method of conceiving things, and all things must be embraced within it. To apply it only to some things is an offence against itself as a method of conception, and brings it into collision with the other method, and speedily introduces complete confusion.

But to return to what is Biblical. The three periods of supernatural revelation are thus distinguished: Before the Fall, it was an outward, personal, sensible intercourse of man with God. After the Fall till Moses, it was a life with a symbolic God, represented by the cherubim at Eden's gate and the flaming sword, by the angel of the Lord, by the angels of God,—in many outward symbols of a present, helpful God, but always through some medium, no longer personally God.[1] From Moses to Christ, though the outward sensuous symbols did not quite cease,—for example, the Shekinah and smoke in the tabernacle, the Angel of the Covenant in the wilderness, the Captain of the Lord's host to Joshua, the Angel to David at the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, and much more,—yet prevailingly, at any rate from Samuel downwards, the supernatural revelation was a revelation in the hearts of the foremost thinkers of the people, or, as we call it, prophetic inspiration, without the aid

[1] Of course, this statement must be modified, if we assume the Angel of the Lord to have been not a created angel, but God Himself in human form.

of external sensuous symbols of God and His presence, except so far as these were permanently given to the prophet in the institutions and history of his people. And as the Old Testament theology is a mere torso—limbs without a head—apart from the New, we cannot help observing how the final revelation (though Scripture speaks of our hoping for a fifth, when "we shall see Him as He is"), the fourth stage, that of Christianity, embodies and perfects all the others. Like the first, it is God—God with us, as with Adam in the garden under the fresh-created heavens; like the second, it is the Angel of Jehovah and the Covenant, a Theophany, God in human form, not now premonitory and transitory, melting away under the scrutiny of some eager saintly eye, but permanent, speaking with a human voice, and saying with it even in His resurrection state, "Handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have";[1] and, like the third, it is also the fulness of the Spirit's revelation, as He said of Himself, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," and as "John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him."[2] Hence that which was spoken by Joel came to pass through Him: "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh."

Thus by a rather slow process we have reached that method of revelation called prophecy. Now the most divergent views have been formed of this whole phenomenon of Hebrew prophecy. Doubtless, equally divergent views have been formed of the whole Jewish economy, but perhaps prophecy is a field where the battle over the meaning of Jewish institutions, or, what is really the same, Christian institutions, may be better fought out than anywhere else, because the field is narrower, and because the essential peculiarities of the system come out so prominently, its very centre rather than its wings being exposed. The question

[1] Luke 24^{39}. [2] John 1^{32}.

is shortly: The phenomena of Hebrew prophecy being what we have seen, what judgment shall we pass upon it? How shall we consider it to be related to God? Is prophecy a natural or a supernatural phenomenon? Now, this whole question is one of evidence. What are the phenomena of Hebrew prophecy? and can they be explained naturally? For all presuppositions, which would exclude anything supernatural, are really of no weight. They may all be reduced to some such propositions as these three: God cannot interfere with the system of things called nature; or, that system of things cannot be interfered with; or, God *will* not interfere with it, and it need not be interfered with. Either God is such that He cannot perform a miracle; or nature is such that a miracle cannot be performed; or both are such that there is no need of performing a miracle, all the ends that God designs being attainable without it.

Now, to make any of these affirmations would surely be very arrogant. To say that God cannot work a miracle, is to say that He cannot do anything additional to what He has done in making the existing system of things, or to what He is doing in upholding it, and that He has no further powers either of willing, or of acting if He willed,—that He is, in fact, *used up* in the present system of things. If the universe or nature be an organised system which is finite, it is evident that, while it may be competent to produce much, there may be things which it is not competent to produce. One can surely conceive a different system than the one that is, a system other than the present. It is Finite; God is Infinite. God, therefore, is not exhausted by it, unless one holds that the Infinite must produce just this Finite. But that is to give up theism. Can one say of any Finite, that it is just what the Infinite must have to be satisfied over against? If not, then one can conceive God adding to the existing world of things, introducing into it something He

has not already put into it. At any rate, even on the most approved principles of Determinism, one can only say that that which is must have been. The Infinite must produce over against Himself a Finite, and He must produce just the Finite which He has produced; but no wise man would say before he examines what this Finite is, whether those occurrences named miraculous be not part of it, or accompaniments of it.

But, as I have said, what concerns us to inquire into is really the manifestation itself called prophecy, and then, on this evidence, to form some estimate of it. These things then may be considered established:

1. Certain of the people of Israel were conscious of an influence upon themselves; they experienced certain states of mind and body; they received an impulse to speak or act. There was a certain class of men among them called prophets, and this fact points to something in these men distinct from the mass of the people. It is evident also that these men were conscious of the states of mind I have referred to, which were not habitual, but intermittent. They were conscious of possessing religious truth of a higher kind than the mass of their countrymen possessed, and of a sudden irresistible impulse to utter these truths publicly. All these phenomena are notorious.

2. It is also very certain that all the extraordinary phenomena of their life, the excitements both of body and mind to which they were subject, and also the possession of the truth they had, these prophets ascribed to God. They likewise ascribed to Him the impulse they felt to declare that truth; and the intermission of that impulse they also considered due to the intermission of the impulse exerted on them by Him. All this was certainly a belief really held by the prophets themselves. And it is equally certain that the belief was really shared by their countrymen, who were not themselves under the same influences. In addition, both

the prophets themselves and their countrymen believed that they could declare things to come, and tell things hidden, and do works of power; and this might of word and deed was also referred to God.

3. The prophets themselves call the divine influence or the divine person acting on them the Spirit of God. To express the variety of the influences they experienced, they use phraseology of various kinds. To describe the coming of this influence, they say that the Spirit was on them, that it rested on them, fell upon them, or laid violent hold upon them.[1] To describe its effects, they say that they were filled with the Spirit;[2] that it moved them,[3] took them, took them up, brought them, spoke in them, went away from them, or passed them by, and such like. To describe the influence as coming from God, they say that God pours out His Spirit[4] upon them, that He gives Him or puts Him upon one,[5] puts Him within one,[6] fills one with Him,[7] takes Him away from one,[8] and so on. To express the power and sometimes even the force of the divine influence, they speak of the hand of the Lord being on them, of its falling upon them, and of its being strong over them. Such phraseology concerning the Spirit and the hand of God describes the prophetic condition generally, both in its outward and its inner relations, for it is evident that the expression 'hand' of the Lord or 'power of the hand' is not exclusively descriptive of the outward phenomena of the prophet's activity, but is applied to the influence of the truth revealed.

4. The prophets and the people drew a distinction between truth so reached and opinions reached by other means, between those who spake by the Spirit and those who spake out of their own heart. That the prophecies differed, could be shown either by their results or by their character. By

[1] צָלַח Judg. 14[6]. [2] מָלֵא Mic. 3[8]. [3] פָּעַם Judg. 13[25].
[4] צָקַ and שָׁפַךְ Joel 3[1], Isa. 44[3]. [5] נָתַן Isa. 44[3]. [6] שׂוּם בְּקֶרֶב Isa. 63[11].
[7] מִלֵּא Ex. 31[3]. [8] לָקַח כֵּן Ps. 51[13].

their results, if their character was not decisive, for the predictions of prophets speaking by the Spirit came true; those spoken by men out of their own heart did not. If it were too long to wait for results, they must then be judged by their character. If the words or counsel of the pretended prophet contradicted any of the principles of the theocracy or of common morals, they were to be discredited at once. "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. But the prophet, who shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken." [1]

This test, however, was one not always immediately applicable. It might be necessary to have some immediate test, whereby to try the prophet. The character of the prophecies was decisive, if their results were uncertain, or even if, for any reason, the prophecies came true. "If there arise among you a prophet or dreamer of dreams, and give a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love your God with all your heart and with all your soul." [2] Thus the moral everywhere takes precedence of the miraculous.

Now these are, briefly, the phenomena of prophecy; and the impression they make on one is that they are altogether extraordinary and not natural. But this impression, which

[1] Deut. $18^{18. 20-22}$. [2] Deut. 13^{1-3}.

the combined phenomenon produces, it has been sought to remove by analysing its various parts, and seeking to show that none of them separately need involve anything supernatural. The manifestation called prophecy, and the men called prophets, it is said, are not confined to the Jews. Prophecy is found among heathen peoples, in its beginnings at least, though in a state no doubt much feebler and less organised than among the Jews. But there is, at any rate, a natural prophecy. Therefore prophecy, as it existed among the Jews, must not forthwith be considered a supernatural phenomenon.

Moreover, not only does the phenomenon exist, but many of its manifestations coincide with those of Hebrew prophecy, as for instance the mental elevation, the ecstasy, the dream, and even, though to a very feeble extent, the utterance of pertinent truth. Now, both these statements may be admitted, and perhaps neither the existence of prophecy nor the mere phenomena of it would prove its supernaturalness; but any supposed identity with heathen prophecy will not disprove its supernatural character. It must be admitted that what reaches a very perfect condition among the Jews is seen only in rudiment among the heathen. And as to the real question,—the specific distinction of natural and supernatural,—it must be had in remembrance that nature and grace, though called specifically distinct, are both realms where God and man meet; and on that account similar phenomena may to some extent be expected in both regions. But the similarity does not disprove the distinction. On the one hand, the bare existence of prophecy and its remarkable phenomena need not at once be held a supernatural thing among the Hebrews, there being at least the rudiments of such a thing among heathen nations. On the other hand, the existence among them of a phenomenon analogous to it, and of similar manifestations, cannot be held to invalidate a difference of category For,

on any hypothesis, God and men are in relation: "He is not far from any one of us"; and similar manifestations may be observable where there is a relation of the same thing, though it be a different relation. As a matter of fact, there is something widely unlike heathen prophecy—with its apparently mere physical excitement, its rigid attachment to certain localities, its meagreness of result, the merely civil matters to which it gave itself, and its final extinction, after having accomplished nothing — in that magnificent phenomenon of Jewish prophecy, which moved almost exclusively in high religious regions, and was so free in its exercise, and has left behind it such a legacy to the world. And it is worth remembering that all the prevailing methods of heathen prophesying are just those which the Bible condemns and proscribes, and punishes with death.

As to the reference of the prophetic word directly to God, this finds a parallel again, it is said, in heathenism; and it is also due very much to a Jewish method of thinking, according to which, in common with all Orientals, they refer every phenomenon without them, and every feeling or impulse, especially of a higher kind, within them, immediately to God. This latter way of thinking among the people of Israel shows, it is said, that the idea of the supernatural was strange to them. Now, though it were the case that the extremely strong theistic feelings of this people did not draw any distinction between the system of nature—all the processes of which were originated by God, and are upheld by Him, and are thus all manifestations of Him—and a certain other class of things also originated by God and manifestations of Him, that would not hinder there being the two things, nor prevent us from distinguishing them, and calling the one supernatural. It might be that the people of Israel looked at them merely as having this in common, that God produced them and was to be seen in them, and that it was this element in them that seemed important.

All that the objection is worth is to invalidate the positive inference to the supernatural from the immediate reference of the prophetic word to God, seeing those who refer it immediately to God certainly also refer natural phenomena immediately to Him. It does not go so far as to require the inference of anything on the other side.

But I think justice is hardly done to Scripture, when it is said that the phenomena of nature and those of revelation are equally referred by it to God, or referred in the same manner to Him. For, without meaning to imply that such abstract notions as the supernatural are to be found in Scripture, I maintain that Scripture does draw the distinction which we so describe. According to it, only the Jews and not the heathen had a revelation from God; only the Jews had the knowledge of the true God, and this knowledge came to them, and was not arrived at by them. God chose Abraham; God gave the law to Israel; He passed the nations by, and left them in darkness. But it is manifest, on the other hand, that that kind of manifestation of Himself which is called natural was common to the heathen as well as to the Jews. Now, here is the fact, and we can hardly expect the categories of modern thinking in Scripture. In many passages of the Old Testament, and of course much more distinctly in the New, the distinction is drawn between the revelation of God in nature and in His law. According to the 19th Psalm, the heavens declare the glory of God, but the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. And the New Testament, while preserving the distinction, affirms that the one method of revelation is common to the whole world, even to the Gentiles: "That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it to them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made";[1] and that the other is denied them, and given only

[1] Rom. $1^{19, 20}$.

to the Jews: "For when Gentiles which have no law do by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves."[1]

Now, I think these are fairly to be regarded as something more than facts. It is not merely that the Jews have something which the other nations want, but God has given them something which He has denied the nations. And the very way of thinking among the people of Israel, according to which natural phenomena were direct works of God, rather goes to show, when they speak of revelation as peculiarly their own, not only that it was not involved in nature, or in those works of God which the Gentiles saw, but, besides being additional, was of another kind.

At any rate, if we cannot with certainty infer from the general phenomena of Hebrew prophecy its supernaturalness, and are thrown back upon that element in it which has always been considered as proving its miraculousness, namely, prediction, there is, I think, in all its separate manifestations an elevation above the analogous things said to be discoverable among the heathen, a something in the manner and degree of it, which raises a fair presumption that it is of another kind. And then, when we find certain predictions uttered by the prophets, and certain wonders wrought by them, and consider that Hebrew prophecy was a unity, and that the prestige of the miracle and the prediction ought to be transferred to all the other manifestations, we feel satisfied of the supernaturalness of the whole manifestation.

And there is another thing which to us in this age is stronger than anything, and that is the internal evidence of the truth of the prophetic words. Their statements regarding God and men and ethical truth commend themselves to us now as self-evidencing. Our position in the world is different from that of antiquity. We are, so to speak, old; and we reason like old men. The world has

[1] Rom. 2^{14}.

had experience of other systems than that of Scripture, and it finds them unsatisfactory. It has had leisure to compare and live through much. It has, if I may say so, the experience of a long life to go upon, and it now feels that the things said by the Hebrew prophets regarding God are true.

CHAPTER XI.

The Prophetic Style and its bearing on the Interpretation of Prophecy.

The prophetic style has several elements which distinguish it from the historical style, that is, from ordinary prose. These elements need to be taken into account, and allowed for, when we seek to ascertain a prophet's meaning, or inquire in what way his prophecy may be expected to be fulfilled. One of these elements is the poetical one.

The prophecies are not written in prose. Their contents are poetical, and, to some extent, their form. They are not perfectly poetical in form like the more perfect Psalms; but that which in Hebrew constitutes poetry, namely, parallelism of thought, either antithetic or synonymous, expressed in short, regular lines, is more or less a characteristic of them. And besides this poetry of form, all the material characteristics of poetry belong in a high degree to the prophecies.

The descriptions of a prophet are, like those of a poet, ideal; and he very largely employs figure. But while a large part of the prophetic language may be explained in this way, some of it must be explained on other principles. The very large use of natural symbolism, such as, on the one side, the darkening of the sun, and the withdrawal of their shining by the stars, the desolation and mourning of the earth, and the like; and, on the other side, the shouting of the waves, and the clapping of their hands by the forests, the blossoming of the desert, and its fertilising through abundant waters, causing

general joy among the wild inhabitants of the waste,—these, though poetry, are descriptions that rest on the basis of a fundamental truth, namely, the unity of the whole creation of which man is the head; for in his joy and salvation, as in his judgment, all nature shares. If we subtract the elements in prophetic language due to this principle, a good deal of its supposed figurativeness will disappear, and also much of the so-called symbolism of it, on which so many curious theories of its interpretation have been based. If it be remembered that the prophets were poets, I do not think their language will seem unnaturally figurative. In saying this, what I wish especially to emphasise is, that there is no pervasive symbolism in the prophetic language,—that, indeed, the language of the prophets is the language naturally to be expected in poetical and oratorical productions such as those of the prophets were,—and that such a theory of the prophetical books as that they are written in a language of symbolism does them injustice.

It is often said that the extreme figurativeness of the prophetic language is due to the fact that prophetic truth was received in vision. Many who speak in this way have no very clear notions as to what a vision is. There is no doubt that the vision, in the strict sense, was no essential of the mode of prophetic revelation. What was essential was that truth should come into the mind, accompanied by the feeling that it was from God. The vision was common, especially in early times. But from the fact that its use decreased or fluctuated, and that it appears in the case of some prophets and not in that of others, we must infer that it was merely a vehicle for revelation, and was not of the essence of revelation itself. It was used, probably, just because it was ready to hand. Now, to say that a person's language is figurative because he has perceived the truth in a vision, is like saying his language is figurative because he thinks in images or has a fancy. This way of speaking arises from

considering the prophetic vision as a thing simply mechanical, —not as an operation or creation of the mind at all, but as an objective thing held before the mind and seen by it, as people and mountains are seen by us when in a waking state.

But the prophetic visions, like all visions, were productions of the prophetic mind. The mind did not see what was projected before it; it projected the visions by its own operation. Hence it is saying little or nothing to say that the prophetic language is figurative, because the prophetic truth was perceived in vision.

Perception by vision being a mental operation and a natural one, though in this case made the means of reaching truth above the natural, we have to go a step further, and inquire why the prophets perceived truth in vision. And the answers to this question will not be one, but many. One answer will be, that the imagination or visual faculty was signally powerful, and that it was the natural organ to use in reaching truth. It was the natural organ in general for people of this nation, with whom the ratiocinative faculty was usually as feeble as the intuitive was strong. And it was specially natural in this class of men, the prophets, among whom, as poets, the imaginative faculty was more powerful than even among the bulk of their countrymen. It was perhaps a natural organ among most early peoples, because in the youth of the world the mind was fresher and more poetic. And also more particularly because truth was then new, and the emotions accompanying its discovery were strong, and the absorption of the mind in its own operations was very great. And as it was moral and religious truth which the Hebrew prophets were discovering, the emotions awakened by which are always profoundest, this adds another element of explanation of the prevalence of visions to those already given. That mechanical way of accounting for things which has greatly prevailed in

reference to the prophets, is the thing to be chiefly avoided. If we say that the prophets were, on the side of their human activity, early Hebrew religious poets and preachers, we account for most elements of the form of their literary productions.

Now, the Old Testament dispensation had certain characteristics easily enough perceived. It was confined to the Jewish people. It was attached to the land of Canaan. It embraced a very complete ceremonial, tabernacle, sacrifices, and the like. It was a kingdom of God on earth, and, in every aspect of it, was manifested in earthly symbols. The prophetic Scriptures are written in terms of this earthly symbolism. Hence, when the prophets speak of the kingdom of God, they speak of the kingdom of God that then was, and as it then was, namely, as an earthly kingdom. When they speak of the King of this kingdom, it is as a Davidic king, whatever attitudes they may assign to Him. When they speak of the extension of the kingdom of God, it is in the usual ways by which an earthly kingdom can be extended, either by warlike subjugation of hostile nations, or by foreign nations voluntarily placing themselves under its sway.

This may be taken as an example of how the prophets speak about every truth connected with the kingdom of God. And the first thing that is implied is this, that Israel was the people of God. That God is, Scripture does not prove, but assumes. That God has a people or Church, is implied in His being and in what He is; and this also needs no proof. That Israel is God's people is many times asserted in Scripture, and is the assumption of the whole of it. This is the distinction between Israel and the nations. The one knows the true God, or rather is known of Him; the others are not so known. There are thus two categories: the one may be called Church, and the other, world; the one, Jews, and the other, Gentiles and heathens. The true religion

prevails in the one, and false religions prevail among the other. These are all forms of expressing a fundamental conception of Scripture that Israel is religiously distinct from all other peoples, and that the true knowledge of the true God is in Israel, and nowhere besides.

Now, if any one chooses he may contest this fundamental distinction. He may deny that such a distinction really existed; but perhaps no one will be found to deny that the idea of it existed, and that it is many times expressed, and always presupposed, in the Scriptures. Without the admission that this is a fundamental idea of the Scriptures, they are absolutely unintelligible. And perhaps not many would deny the substantial truth of the idea. For to admit it does not necessarily require the admission of the supernaturalness of the revelation among Israel; there may be a true and a false religion, although both be religions of nature. And it is now rather the manner of writers on Comparative Religion to admit the substantial trueness of the Jewish religion and the comparative falseness of all others, even while denying any generic distinction between the one and the other as to their origin. There was given to Israel the task of discovering and propagating the true religion, as there fell to the share of Greece the duty and the delight of disseminating the principles of beauty, and to Rome those of law. At all events, the idea prevails in Scripture not only in general, but in many particulars. Israel is not merely the kingdom of God, but Zion is His holy hill, the seat of His throne, and the family of David sits upon God's throne in Jerusalem; and all that machinery of life and rule, which must exist in any well-ordered people, was, as existing in Israel, the government and manifestation of the kingdom of God.

But nevertheless, on the other hand, this outward material form must never be forgotten. Israel was a kingdom among the kingdoms of the world; it was one of the

nations; its land was a country among the countries of the East. All was real and substantial. This form was a thing as real as that other idea of which we have spoken. I think it may be questioned if the prophets had any idea of a Church abstractly, *i.e.* distinct in place and form from the Jewish commonwealth, or a thing of no place or form. The form of the Jewish State was inseparable from the idea of the kingdom of God. And, on the other hand, the idea of this kingdom was inseparable from the form of the Jewish State. The prophets do not seem at any time to speak of the State simply without considering it the kingdom of God, nor do they seem ever to contemplate a time when the form and the idea may be dis-associated, when the Jewish people shall be no more the kingdom of God, when it shall be a mere nation, and not, as now, also the Church. So firmly, indeed, are the two things welded together, that even in the new dispensation, when the kingdom of God becomes so extended that it embraces the nations, Israel, the present form of the kingdom, remains unaltered. There is a union of Jew and Gentile, but no incorporation. Both remain distinct; the relation is conceived of rather as a homage than as an alliance, it is certainly never an amalgamation.

This shows what is meant by saying that the language of the prophets is dispensational. It is meant, in a word, that in all their statements about the kingdom of God, even when uttering the most spiritual and glorious truths regarding it, what they speak about is the kingdom of God in that form and in those relations in which it existed in their own day. Thus, when Micah speaks of the Messiah who shall come out of Bethlehem Ephratah and rule God's people Israel and give them peace, he conceives Him as coming in the conditions of the kingdom of God then existing, and of the world and the nations that then were: "And this Man shall be peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land . . . thus shall He deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh

into our land, and when he treadeth within our border."[1] And Isaiah says, when describing the felicity and unity of the latter days: "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines towards the West; they shall spoil them of the East together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them."[2] And Joel, describing the final condition of things when the day of the Lord and the great judgment is over, says: "Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom a desolate wilderness. . . . But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation."[3] Now, certainly in these passages the highest truths of the kingdom of God are prophesied. In the first passage, immunity in the Messiah's reign from all foes of God's kingdom; in the second, peace and unity within the kingdom, and victory over all without; and in the last, the eternity of this peace and victory; but all these lofty truths are expressed in terms of the condition of things existing in the prophet's own day.

Now, then, it is evident that the prophets are dealing with certain ideas and also certain things,—ideas such as the kingdom of God, and that which is not the kingdom of God, the nations, or, as we name it, the world; and things such as the Jewish State and the nations. And it is evident that though they never speak of these ideals abstractly, but always as they appeared in their day, the kingdom of God under the form of the Jewish State, and the world under the form of the nations of the earth, they may many times speak of them ideally, *i.e.* say things of them both far higher than it was possible for either of them to reach in the present mixed condition of the world. The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and Israel may be spoken of as righteous and peaceful. The world lieth in wickedness, and Babylon or Egypt may be spoken of as altogether evil. The

[1] Mic. $5^{5,6}$. [2] Isa. $11^{13,14}$. [3] Joel 3^{19}.

perfect features of the idea will be attributed to each, although the face of Israel was never so lovely as that face of the Church "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing"; and though the aspect of Babylon was never so hideous as that of the bloated harlot with the intoxicating cup of sorceries in her hand. Here we must either make allowance for the ideal character of the delineation, or relegate the fulfilment to the time when all that is now tendency shall have become consummation, when the severance between the tares and the wheat shall be complete.

Again, the very opposite phenomenon may appear. If the form under which the kingdom of God existed in the time of the prophets should be considered not essential, or should have become altered in our day, their prophecies which embody that form may require some modification in interpretation, in order to accommodate them to the time when they are to be fulfilled. Thus two classes of prophecies may require some consideration in interpretation, namely, those where the delineation of Israel or the nations is of them ideally, as Church or world, *i.e.* where the form is almost entirely disregarded; and those where they are spoken of as they existed of old, *i.e.* where the form comes into great prominence. Regarding the first class, we should have to inquire, How are they to be fulfilled in any temporal dispensation? And regarding the others, How shall they be fulfilled now in the present dispensation, which is so different from the former?

In reference particularly to delineations of the latter kind, it is sometimes said that the prophets paint New Testament truths in colours borrowed from the Old. Those who speak in this way usually mean to say that the prophets consciously used a form of speech which they knew was not real. But this is just another fragment of that huge machine which used to go under the name of Revelation. What is to be maintained above all things is, that the

prophets were serious in their delineations of truth. They knew nothing but their own dispensation. That dispensation was a kingdom of God in a certain form, and it may be safely said that they had no knowledge of a kingdom of God in any other form. No doubt, they occasionally broke through the atmosphere of their own dispensation, and soared into regions higher and purer. Jeremiah predicts the formation of a new covenant with Israel, in which God would write His law on their hearts and not on tables of stone,—that is, a spiritual covenant, and no more an earthly one, like the Sinaitic. And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews argues skilfully enough from this prediction of a new covenant to the abrogation of the old: "In that He saith a new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which waxeth old is ready to vanish away."[1] But the rareness and the lateness of such breach with the old form is what gives it its significance.

In these ancient prophets, the Church even of the Glorification still cleaves to Zion hill as its earthly centre. And I must repeat that it cannot be shown that the prophets ever used the words Zion, Jerusalem, and the like, as mere symbols of the Church of God. In the prophetic Scriptures, these words have always their natural, local, material force,—the place of the Church of God. Nor can it be shown that the name of any country, such as Edom or Egypt, had ever lost its natural sense, and become a symbol for the world or the world-power, or for the enemies of the Church. These nations, such as Egypt, Babylon, and the like, were the world, the world-power; and, of course, the words connote this idea along with the literal one. But in the Old Testament prophets the words had never come to connote this idea merely. Such terms in the prophets are always to be taken in their literal, natural sense. This I consider the first principle in prophetic interpretation—to

[1] Heb. 8^{13}.

read the prophet literally—to assume that the literal meaning is *his* meaning—that he is moving among realities, not symbols, among concrete things like peoples, not among abstractions like *our* Church, world, etc. If we make this assumption, then we know what we have before us. We have a known relation of things, and we can comprehend what is said concerning it. We see the prophet's hopes and fears, his certainties, and, what fills up a much larger part of his page, his anticipations, his presentiments, his feelings and gropings after truth and the future of God's kingdom.

We have, in a word, a living, thinking man, taught of God, amidst his circumstances, the leader of God's people in these circumstances, and speaking to them the truth in terms of their circumstances; a man not illuminated further than was needful to make him useful for the work of his day, —a work for which, perhaps, perfect illumination would have unfitted him,—and therefore not a man made to use mechanically a symbolic speech which, if true for us, would have been a sheer mystery and unintelligibility to himself. The first thing in interpreting prophecy is to hold that the prophet had a meaning, that he uses language like any other writer, and that what he literally says he literally means. Thus, and thus alone, can we reach his meaning.

It is another question altogether whether his literal meaning shall be literally fulfilled. A thousand things may intervene to modifiy the expression of the idea in its fulfilment. For the prophet spoke of the kingdom of God as it was in his day, though he may have said something of it that is going to come about only in our day. He represented this as coming about in the conditions of his own time, while these conditions have quite disappeared, and the thing has yet to come about; and when it comes about, it will be in the conditions of our day or of a future day,—conditions very different indeed from his, and therefore it will come about in a way very different from his conception

of it. Accordingly, when a discrepancy arises between the terms and form of a prophecy given in Old Testament times and the form in which we naturally look to see it realised in our times, it is, of course, an error to insist on the literal terms, and say, "These literal terms are the prophecy; and being a prophecy, it must be literally verified. We cannot see how nations that no longer exist can take part in actual transactions; but they are named in the prophecy, and it is ours to believe: the day will declare." Of the persons who so speak, one must say that they sacrifice their reason to their faith; and they probably injure the truth more by their irrationality than they advance it by the spectacle of their faith.

On the other hand, it is equally an error to say, "This prophecy can be realised now, in the times to which it refers, only in this general way. All these particulars of the Old Testament form are only symbols; they must be stripped off, and then the bare truth they covered must be apprehended alone, and applied." This is equally false, because it gives no account of the form, and how thinking religious men so conceived the truth, and so expressed it. Of course, this method leads to less absurdity than the other in the matter of fulfilment; but it is the fruit of a purely mechanical conception of the origin of the prophetic Scriptures. The true way to regard prophecy is to accept it literally as the meaning of the prophet,—the only meaning which in his time he could have,—but to say, as to fulfilment, that the form of the kingdom of God is now altered, and altered finally, never to return to its old form; and so fulfilment will not take place in the form of the prediction, but in an altered form; but still the truth of the prophecy will, no doubt, be realised. If it be objected to this way of conceiving the prophecies, that it makes the prophets state what is false, and appear as erring, ignorant men, the answer is, that it merely makes them share in the imperfection of the dispensation to which they belonged. And if it did not

misbecome the author of revelation to give it gradually, at sundry times and in divers manners, — bit by bit and in imperfect forms,—it cannot have been unbecoming to use in the giving of it human minds imperfectly enlightened. And it does not reduce them quite so far as is often alleged; for, as in the case of Jeremiah already cited, they were enabled, at any rate occasionally and in some particulars, to rise above their dispensation.

In reading any Hebrew prophet, we cannot but be struck with the fact that he moves among general truths and principles, and deals but rarely with anything that is specifically prediction. And even those things that are predicted are not contingent occurrences, but great *momenta* and developments which appear necessary in the kingdom of God, such as the judgment, the pouring out of the Spirit, the restoration of Israel's captivity, and the destruction of all the foes of God's kingdom. These seem to be less of the nature of predictions than the enunciation of great necessary principles, presentiments due to the religious and moral nature of the prophet, and anticipations of the broadest kind in regard to the kingdom of God. But in any inquiry as to how the things expressed by the prophet may be expected to be realised, any difference of opinion on this point is unimportant. What is important is that these anticipations are uttered in this early age, and that they will, no doubt, yet find a realisation in the history of the Church; for if any one hold them to be not predictions of contingencies, but expressions of essential developments of the kingdom of God, he must all the more firmly look to see them yet fulfilled. So far, different views of prophecy will not hinder agreement. But as these predictions or anticipations are put forth in language certainly coloured by the conditions of the world and the Church at the time of their utterance, and as these conditions have passed away without this fulfilment taking place, we cannot help inquiring whether there be not, in all

prophecy, a large amount that need not be expected to go into fulfilment, and what elements in prophecy are, therefore, to be considered unessential.

Now, prophecy is, as has been stated, poetical. This statement that it is poetical, I mean both in its positive and negative side. It is poetical, but it is not allegorical. The language of prophecy is real as opposed to allegorical, and poetical as opposed to real. When the prophets speak of natural objects or of the lower creatures, they do not mean human things by them, or human beings, but these natural objects or creatures themselves. When Joel speaks of locusts, he means these creatures. When he speaks of the sun, and moon, and stars, he means these bodies. When he says, "How do the beasts groan!" he means the beasts, and not, as Hengstenberg thinks, the uncovenanted nations of the heathen world. When Isaiah says that there shall be a day of the Lord of hosts upon every one that is proud and lofty, "and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon every high tower, and upon all ships of Tarshish,"[1] he speaks literally, not allegorically, and really refers to cedars of Lebanon, to high towers, ships of Tarshish, and the like, and not to men under these figures. He is just speaking as literally as Joel does when he says, "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."[2] All these statements, when made by the prophets, are to be taken as real, and not as allegorical.

But, on the other hand, what the prophets say of these may often be said poetically and not really, like that splendid description of the locusts in Joel, or those signs in the heavenly bodies enumerated among the terrors that are

[1] Isa. 2^{12-16}. [2] Joel $2^{30, 31}$.

to herald the day of the Lord. It is a fair question how much of what is thus said is to be interpreted literally. But there is no question whether it be those natural objects that are really spoken about. And this principle must be applied also to the interpretation of the Apocalypse. Thus the beasts that come up out of the bottomless pit are to be translated locusts, and not Turks or Saracens. When the tail of the great red dragon [1] is described as casting down a third part of the stars to the earth, that is not to be taken allegorically, that he threw down a third part or some part of the princes of the earth out of the political horizon, but that his fury and power were such that he seemed to lash the stars of heaven with his tail. It is, of course, possible that as the angel of the bottomless pit is an apostate angel, and as the stars or heavenly host are often in the Old Testament confused with the angels, this angel's dragging a third part of the host of heaven with him may refer to events in heaven of which we have notice elsewhere, and may point to a fall of angels of whom he was the leader. So, when the third angel sounded, and there was a great star burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and on the fountains of water; and the name of the star is called Wormwood, and the third part of the waters became wormwood, and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter,[2]—that star is not to be allegorised into some baleful leader, like Attila the Hun, falling on the third part of the human race,—here called waters,—because men are here distinguished from the waters of which they drank and died. The whole is to be taken as meaning the things said.

All this is so evident, that I would not have alluded to the matter at all, if this way of allegorising into human relations the symbolism of nature were not often made the basis of prophetical interpretation. Even Dr. Fair-

[1] Rev. 12. [2] Rev. 8.

bairn says,[1] "As little will the interpreter doubt that both in the prophecies of Old Testament Scripture and in the Book of Revelation, mountains are a common designation for worldly kingdoms, stars for ruling powers, roaring and troubled seas for tumultuous nations, trees for the higher, as grass for the lower, grades of society, running streams for the means of life and refreshment," etc. In a popular anonymous exposition, the author writes as follows: "Thus by diligent search in the Scriptures we discover the symbols here employed in such connection that their meaning is obvious; and when we meet the same symbol in the Apocalypse, we have only to transfer its ascertained meaning to the prediction under review, and without more ado we translate it into plain language; thus we come to read off the Apocalyptic prophecies much as we should any ordinary writing. As an example of the way in which an alphabet of the Apocalypse might be made out, we may instance a few of its more prominent symbols:—Earth symbolises society in a settled state; sea, society in a state of convulsion; rivers, nations; a flood, nations in motion; mountains and islands, great and small kingdoms; air, the political atmosphere; heaven, the civil or ecclesiastical firmament; sun, the monarch; stars, inferior rulers; hail and thunder, wars; earthquakes, revolution; horn, king or kingdom," etc. Now, there is no attempt made to prove that such a symbolism prevails in Scripture. All that is thought needful is to find some passage in the Old Testament Scripture where the natural object in question is compared to the human thing or relation, or *vice versâ*, and it is assumed that wherever the natural object occurs, henceforth in the Apocalypse it may be interpreted of the human relation.

The simplest and most legitimate way of treating these assumptions is to deny them. I deny that the 'sun' means

[1] Fairbairn on *Prophecy*, p. 138.

chief ruler in prophetical Scripture, or anything else than the sun; that the 'moon' means anything but the moon, and the 'stars' anything but the heavenly bodies so called. I deny that 'air' means the political atmosphere, or 'heavens' the social or ecclesiastical firmament,—abstractions absolutely unheard of in Scripture. I deny that 'island' means little kingdom, and 'mountain' great kingdom, or that there is any established usage whereby they mean anything but island and mountain respectively. The word 'islands' may also be translated 'coasts'; and as the islands themselves and the indented island-like coasts of many parts of the Mediterranean, which were most familiar to Scripture writers, were the most populous parts of the earth, 'islands' may mean populous lands; and very naturally mountains may stand for any lofty object, particularly any great obstacle, whether kingdom or otherwise, to the advancement of God's cause, as in Zech. 4^7. "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." But there is no such established usage in prophetical Scripture as that mountain may forthwith be translated kingdom. I deny that 'rivers' means nations, or 'floods' nations in motion, or 'sea' society in a state of convulsion, except when they are expressly declared to do so; and that it is a legitimate style of interpretation to say that the floods which the dragon vomited forth after the woman were the hordes of northern nations; and that the earth swallowing them up, means their absorption by the settled state of society,—one of the most respectable uses of this method, but without foundation.

It is quite natural that the first world-monarchy, Babylon on the Euphrates, that queenly city sitting on many waters, should be idealised into that great empire reposing on many peoples. And it is expressly so explained of Rome, the new Babylon, in the Apocalypse, "that the waters where the whore sitteth are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and

tongues." But the fact of an explanation being added shows that there is no established usage, and that elsewhere we cannot venture on such an explanation. I deny that 'hail and thunder' mean wars: they mean hail and thunder, which may be God's great instruments of judgment, as they were in Egypt. Neither does 'earthquake' mean revolution, nor 'horn' kingdom, except when they are said to do so. Horn has the general sense of instrument of pushing, or power, in Zechariah; but no doubt in Daniel it has the meaning, king or kingdom, and also in the Apocalypse, which resumes largely the symbolism of Daniel. But in both cases it is expressly explained to be a symbol of kingly power or of a king in certain cases, though in others it can hardly be so, for the dragon has seven heads and ten horns.

Now, if we deny any such symbolical or allegorical alphabet, much more may we deny that any book of Scripture is written in it. And if to these denials we add one more, namely, that 'day' in prophetical Scripture means year, we shall be safe against both the operations and the conclusions of the Apocalyptists. What we have to beware of is a tendency to regard Scripture as written in an artificial style, which requires much expenditure of ingenuity to see through. Under this impression we hear and read of what is called the 'structure' of prophecy; as if the prophetical books had some special form peculiar to themselves, or as if there were something formal and of set purpose in the shape which the prophecies have, which could be discovered only after much investigation. It is perhaps not surprising that artificial webs should have been woven by students of the Bible over the face of Scripture. When we consider the amount of thought bestowed on the Bible for so many ages, the fascination which its study has had for devout minds, many of whom, however, were not very well disciplined or regulated, and the tendency of such minds to find something strange or out of the common in Scripture, less in its thoughts, which

are out of the common, than in its form, we do not wonder that the interpretation of some parts of it, particularly the prophetical, should have been made a very artificial thing.

But now we must return to our consideration of the poetical and dispensational elements in prophecy, and the influence they may be supposed to have on interpretation. These two elements are not generally kept apart, but are found mixed together. As an example of pure poetry, we may take Joel's description of the assault of the locusts; and as an example of pure dispensational reference, his statement that God will bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem. Both elements are mixed together in Isaiah's prophecy of the mountain of the Lord: "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob." Poetry and dispensation are also found commingled in the concluding passage of Joel's prophecy:

"The mountains shall drop down new wine,
And the hills shall flow with milk,
And all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters;
And a fountain shall come forth of the house of the
Lord,
And shall water the valley of Shittim.
Egypt shall be a desolation,
And Edom a desolate wilderness.
. . . . .
But Judah shall dwell for evermore,
And Jerusalem from generation to generation."

In almost all the predictions of the prophets, there are elements that we hardly expect to pass into fulfilment, whether these are against the nations hostile to Israel, or

regarding the felicity of Israel in the latter days. Thus in Isa. 13 the following occurs in the prophecy against Babylon:

"It shall never be inhabited,
Neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation;
Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there;
Neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.
But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there;
And their houses shall be full of doleful creatures;
And owls shall dwell there,
And satyrs shall dance there."[1]

And in the prediction of the ruin of Edom, where it is said:

"The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch,
And the dust thereof into brimstone,
And the land thereof shall become burning pitch.
It shall not be quenched night nor day;
And the smoke thereof shall go up for ever."[2]

Likewise, in his description of the final peace and felicity of Israel, we read:

"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.
And the cow and the bear shall feed,
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like an ox.
And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,
And the weaned child put his hand on the basilisk's den."[3]

On what principles shall we interpret such language? Let us approach the question gradually. First, it is a good rule to examine carefully what the prophet actually says,

[1] Isa. $13^{20f.}$. [2] Isa. $34^{9f.}$. [3] Isa. 11^{6-8}.

to consider whether he be predicting any specific historical event, or whether he be not rather enunciating some general principle of the kingdom of God. It is rarely safe to ask, to what historical event does the prophet here refer? because he may have no such reference. It is safe to assume that he has some general thought which he is uttering. This is both safe and fair, because the cases in which the prophets utter general principles preponderate greatly over the cases in which they directly predict future contingencies. For example, when Joel says, speaking for God, "It shall come to pass afterwards that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh," it is not safe as a method of interpreting, nor fair to the writer whom we seek to interpret, to inquire: To what historical event does the prophet refer in these words? Is he thinking of Pentecost, or of some greater outpouring yet to come upon the Church of the last days? Who knows whether he was thinking of any historical event? He is predicting things, not individual historical events. When Isaiah predicts that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be exalted above the hills, is he predicting the early history of Christianity? or the later, when Israel shall be restored, and be the centre of a new world? Or is he predicting any particular event, and not rather just expressing the general conception that all nations shall yet acknowledge that Israel possesses the truth, and shall derive their own knowledge of the truth from Israel?

We must realise to ourselves the prophet's position. He is a prophet in Israel. At present Israel alone possesses the knowledge of Jehovah, the true God. But this knowledge shall yet be universal. Though confined to Israel now, it shall go forth from Israel to all peoples. Moreover, in the prophet's day, those acknowledging Jehovah went up to Jerusalem to worship,—and so Isaiah represents all nations as making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, being worshippers of Jehovah, who has His seat there.

If we begin by asking to what event did the prophet refer, we foreclose any but one application of the prophecy, and we do violence to the terms of the prediction. Joel predicted an outpouring of God's Spirit on all flesh: if that has ever taken place, it has been a fulfilment of the prediction; and if it take place again, it will be another fulfilment; and if it take place continuously through thousands of years, it is also a fulfilment of the prophecy. If it has not yet taken place, the prophecy has not yet been fulfilled; if it has taken place in some measure, if that measure was such that the language could be fairly used of it, then, up to that measure, the fulfilment has come about. But if there be any defect, seeing the words of the prophet are round and strong, that defect will, no doubt, yet be remedied, and the fulfilment take place up to the fair measure of the prediction. The Apostle Peter applies the words to the time of Pentecost. He does not say they were exhausted in that application, and so applicable to these times alone. But he says that they had not been applicable to any event before that time, for the words of Joel, "Afterwards I will pour out My Spirit," he changes into, "In the last days I will pour out My Spirit"; and that expression, "In the last days," is technical for the Christian era.

What Joel predicts is that thing which is characteristic of Christianity—the pouring out of God's Spirit; the question of time is given in the expression 'the last days,' the dispensation of which the thing predicted is characteristic. But the prediction may be fulfilled in any event exhibiting this characteristic, whether at the beginning or towards the consummation of the new dispensation, or at any point within its duration, that is, the prediction may be *a-fulfilling*—may be receiving fulfilment, more or less complete, throughout the Christian dispensation, though it must yet be adequately fulfilled. In other words, what the prophecy contains is not

strictly the historical event of Pentecost; it may contain many other historical events, some of which are yet to come. What it predicts is the new dispensation, with its characteristic, the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh; the gift of the Spirit, and the universality of the gift, and the truth that it is no more the peculiar property of men such as the Old Testament prophets. It is the same prediction as Jeremiah's prediction of the New Covenant: "I will write My law on their hearts; and they shall no more teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them."

Again, a second rule is not only to examine closely what the prophet actually says, but, if we have reason to think that he is speaking in language not literal, to inquire what *ideas* at least lie under the figurative or dispensational language. Thus, when Joel says that the hills shall drop down new wine, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with water, in the regenerated world, he means that the evils which in his day afflicted men should, in that happy day, be turned into their opposite goods. And when he says that Egypt shall be a desolation, and the like, he means that the enemies of God's kingdom shall certainly then, or ere then, be all quite destroyed. And when Isaiah predicts that the creatures now at enmity shall be reconciled, and that a little child shall touch the most dangerous, and lead the most savage and powerful of them, he certainly expresses the idea of a universal peace upon the earth, when all violence and wrong shall be at an end, and enmities shall cease. His prophecy is, first of all, a prophecy regarding men, and regarding the condition of the kingdom of God. "There shall be abundance of peace, and they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain." Those in the kingdom shall be secure from all dangers, just as it is elsewhere represented that God's people shall make a covenant with the beasts of the field, which, of course, at that time were

dangerous. This is certainly Isaiah's idea; and it may be that, in order to give vivid expression to his idea of this peace on earth, he represents the enmities and cruel natures, even of the lower creatures, as disappearing; just as one, in painting a picture of perfect peace, might represent the wild animals quietly led by a child. At least, this is the main conception expressed by his prophecy, though it is possible that more may be expressed. But whether more or not, may be left over on the first and general consideration of the prophecy. Similarly, when in the same prophecy he says "that the Lord shall recover the remnant of His people that shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from the islands of the sea, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth"; and when Joel says "that God shall bring again the captivity of His people," both of them certainly mean that at the time of which they speak, or in that condition of things to which they refer, those evils that afflict the members of the kingdom of God now—evils of dispersion and oppression—shall all have ceased; and they shall never more be deprived of their privileges, or warred against and overcome by a hostile world. In like manner, when Isaiah predicts such a desolation for Babylon, we may be certain, if the event be fulfilled at all, that that which is Babylon shall be destroyed. And when Zechariah comforts Zion, saying, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh to thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass," he means at least that the King of Zion shall not come to her as a man of war, but as a Prince of Peace.

So far, all interpreters of prophecy proceed harmoniously. But at this point a divergency commences. One school considers that no more of fulfilment is to be looked for than the general realising of the ideas. The clothing of the ideas has to be stripped away. There is no correspondence to be looked for

between the form of the prediction and the form of the fulfilment. Should history show an actual correspondence, that will be due to one or other of three things: either it will be coincidence; or, second, it will be essential to fulfilment in any form, and present in the fulfilment because essential to every form of fulfilment, and not because given in the prediction. Indeed, its presence in the prediction is to be explained on this very ground. Thirdly, it may be wilful on the part of the person fulfilling the prophecy, arising from his being acquainted beforehand with the prediction, as may have been the case with several of the so exact fulfilments of prophecy in Christ's history; or it may be wilful on the part of God, an after disposal of things, so as very visibly and strikingly to fulfil even literally a prophecy which would have been fulfilled quite to the full, had no such literal correspondence between its terms and the events been seen. This last is called by Dr. Arnold[1] 'fulfilment *ex abundante*,' and, of course, is to be seen only in a few prophecies.

Another school pursues a method of interpreting precisely the opposite of this, and considers that the ideas of the prophecy will come to fulfilment exactly in the form in which they are expressed in the prediction. They hold, for example, that the exact terms of the prediction of the destruction of Babylon will be realised; that Israel literally, *i.e.* the Jewish people, will be gathered out of all lands and again restored to their own land, and much more of the same kind. This school of interpreters is greatly represented by those who make a very large apologetic use of prophecy.

Now, without following either school, we may state, as a third rule, that it seems only what is due to Scripture, to inquire whether, in addition to the fulfilment of the main ideas, some part of the form, or all of the form, in which the prophet presents the main ideas, may not also

[1] Cf. Two Sermons on the Interpretation of Prophecy, in *Sermons*, vol. i.

be realised in the event. The fulfilment must take place in some form; and it is certainly in many cases quite possible that it should take place in something like the form presented by the prophet. The fact that he conceived the fulfilment in any specific form, suggests a line of inquiry to us, apart from his authority; and ought to be enough, when we take his authority into account, to make us search reverently, whether from the nature of the case also, if the prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, we may not look for it as he has described; or, if it be already fulfilled, whether history does not show it to have been so fulfilled. The difficulties in the way of this investigation will perhaps be many and great; and perhaps the advantages to be gained from any actual discoveries that we may make may not be important. The chief advantage will be found in taking up this attitude towards prophecy. Certainly, very remarkable correspondences between the form of events fulfilling prophecy and the terms of prophecy can be shown; and it is both the part of a scientific inquirer after truth and of a reverent student of prophecy, not hastily to take up with any current method, but to maintain an attitude of reserve, till he can bring his own investigations to some head.

To sum up, therefore, our conclusions as to the fulfilment of poetical language. *First*, It is essential to a fair appreciation of prophecy to admit the poetical element. The prophecies are not strictly poetry in form, that is, their parallelism is not so complete as in the Psalms, but in all that concerns the thoughts they are poetry, and they approximate in the structure of the sentence to the exactest form of poetry among the Hebrews. They are prose poetry, or poetical oratory. Now it is the nature of poetry to be ideal. The event predicted or described will have flung about it all the pecularities that characterise such events in general, and these characteristics will be presented in their most

perfect form and degree. Consequently, to expect fulfilment in the exact terms of the prophecy, is to mistake its nature. Fulfilment in the manner and up to the measure given in the prediction is not to be expected, but only fulfilment in general. For example, when the prophet Micah predicts that Zion shall be ploughed like a field, his language means nothing more than that the city shall be utterly wasted. We do not expect that the plough should actually go over Zion; and if history should show that it had not, we should still regard the prophecy as completely fulfilled. Again, though Christ Himself says of the temple, that not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down, while the excavations of Captain Warren have laid bare some rows of great stones with the marks of Phœnician stone-hewers on them, showing that they had never from the most ancient times been displaced, we do not regard the prophecy as any the less signally verified. If an interpreter possess a moderate share of common reason, he will not, on the one hand, look for such minuteness of fulfilment, nor, on the other, think that the want of it invalidates the prophecy.

Second, But now, if we inquire with what amount of exactitude we may expect to see the prophecy fulfilled, I believe that each case must be investigated for itself. We must not assume that none of the details and no part of the form will come to fulfilment; but we may not be able, from the prophecy itself, to say how much. Still we may assume that some part will, and we must turn to other considerations or other sources of information or presumption, to determine the amount. But it is evident that, if we hold the main ideas to be certainly fulfilled, the question of the details, or degree, or manner is much less important, and more a matter for private investigation than for public confession or teaching. One consideration that will prove helpful will be the general nature of the case, or what probabilities arise from the general conditions of the prediction. We shall not likely derive much

help from this; because, though we may thus be enabled to expect with some degree of confidence to find certain things in the fulfilment literally, which are also in the prediction, they may be things essential to fulfilment, and would be there, whether they had been predicted or no. Thus, when Isaiah says that doleful solitary birds shall dwell in the ruins of Babylon, that, on the one hand, is so invariable an accompaniment of desolation that we might look for its presence though not predicted, and so much an element of the idea of ruin, that we look for it in the prediction, whether it be fulfilled or no. With regard, therefore, to those ideal delineations, we may be unable to verify the connection between the details of the prediction and those of the fulfilment.

Again, we may find some help in other Scripture, which may indicate what presumptions there are, that the prophecy will be fulfilled precisely as predicted. Thus, with regard to that prophecy of Isaiah's regarding the harmonious fellowship of the creatures in the restored world, it is an interesting inquiry what the teaching of Scripture is regarding death even among the lower creatures, and their fierce warring upon one another, which science shows to pervade all grades of being, the fiercest conflicts being seen to rage even among the microscopic animalcules. Other Scripture might help to show us whether it is probable that the prophet spoke what was a literal opinion to himself, or clothed a truth which had reference to men alone, in this remarkable dress. Keeping the question open will lead us at least into interesting lines of inquiry.

Once more, the history of fulfilment, whether in Scripture or in profane history, may be fruitful of information to us. But any induction of historical fulfilment will need to be very widely made, and such results may not rise from it as we hope for. Because, on the one hand, we have very little history relating to the fulfilment of prophecy, and from its nature prophecy often fulfils itself gradually, and we must

pursue the track of history down through many ages. We cannot conclude, because we find in the first incidence of the prediction, so to speak, no exact fulfilment, that there may not be exactitude. And, on the other hand, we may be in doubt whether some of the details be not coincidence, and whether others be not essential. In that prophecy of Zechariah regarding the coming of the King to Zion, it would be unwise, I should think, to say that only the idea of Christ's humility and peaceful rule is predicted in the figure used by the prophet, namely, riding upon an ass. Standing at a point anterior to fulfilment, we might be inclined to think so, and there might be considerations which would lead us to consider it improbable that the act predicted should literally take place. But, now that history shows it to have been actually verified, would it be wise to deny it to have been a real element of the prediction? To argue that Christ intentionally verified it out of condescension to the weakness and needs of His countrymen, does not seem to alter the nature of the earlier prediction. Whatever led to the fulfilment,—even though it were Christ's view that it was needful to fulfil it literally,—should we not infer that this way of fulfilment was involved in the prediction?

Now, this may be satisfactory, so far as the prophet's own mind was concerned. But the question has another side—a side in reference to Scripture as the word of God. And it is this side which has, as was natural, been chiefly thought of in the Church; and that side of the question which concerned the prophet's own mind has only very recently risen into any prominence and commanded any interest. It was natural, when such a prophecy as that of Micah was read regarding the Messiah, who, the prophet said, should save his people from the Assyrian, to ask how the latter term was to be understood, seeing the Assyrian had disappeared long ere the Messiah came? And the

natural suggestion was that the term 'Assyrian' was symbolical or typical of the Church's foes. Hence the general theory prevailed that everything within Israel and around her was typical, and symbolised things in the new dispensation. Thus Scripture, though using such symbolic language, means no more than the general ideas underlying the phraseology. This has been the general theory, and this is the kind of language used, when difficulties of this sort arose.

It was thought that some such theory was necessary in order to uphold a doctrine of Scripture sufficiently high; for if Scripture represented the Assyrian as existing in the time of the Messiah, while history has shown him to have disappeared long before the Messiah's advent, Scripture might be brought into disrepute; while, if all that Scripture meant by the Assyrian was the general idea of foe of God's people, then it remained true, for the Messiah restrains and conquers all His and our enemies. The theory, however, is a very artificial one, and it does no justice either to history or to the prophet's mind. Certainly the prophet, so far as his own mind was concerned, did not use the term 'Assyrian' merely as a symbolical name for foe of the Church. He meant the Assyrian,—who, no doubt, was the foe of the Church. And perhaps, without burdening ourselves with any theory of typology of this kind, it is safer to say, not that Assyria is a symbol or type of all enemies of God's kingdom, but that the truth expressed by the prophet in regard to Assyria is, of course, not limited to Assyria, but may be applied to all foes of the people of God. It is a truth which may be generalised, though the circumstances of early revelation led to its being expressed at first in a form which was not general but particular. Probably this statement will not seem to differ much from the other. At all events, this way of stating the case conserves the literal sense of the prophet's words, and allows us to perceive how he thought and spoke,

as one would naturally do in the circumstances in which he was placed. In other words, his language and thought were what is called dispensational. He did not give forth abstract thoughts, but expressed truths for the instruction of the people of God of his own day in terms of the condition of the world in that day, for in no other way could he have been instructive to those to whom he spoke.

But in interpreting such language, or at least in reading it for our own guidance in this age, while we must first, above all things, if we are to understand the prophet, read his language literally, we may have to take into account very many considerations. For example, in the prophecy, Isa. 2^{1-5}, we must distinguish between the general idea and the particular form, not now likely to be realised, as an actual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Scripture certainly expects that, in our interpretation of such a prophecy, we shall employ the principles of common sense, and above all that we shall bring to bear upon the earlier parts the clearer light supplied by revelation in its later stages. No prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation, in the sense that it is to be read separately. Scripture is a whole; and each part of it is to be interpreted in the light of the whole; and while we must read it literally in order to understand the message of the prophet for his own age, we may be obliged for many reasons to conclude that only the general idea which he expresses remains true for our own and future ages.

This is a wide principle. And it is just at this point that the two great schools of prophetic interpretation go apart from one another. I may take an illustration. Every prophet predicts the return of Israel to her own land in the latter days. In the final state of the kingdom of God upon the earth, the people shall again dwell in the ancient heritages. Now this idea of the prophets must certainly be taken literally, if we desire to understand what *they* mean. They are not, when they so speak, using an elaborate system

of symbolical language, according to which Israel is a symbol of the Church or people of God, and the land of Canaan a symbol for those spiritual blessings which God shall richly bestow on His people, when the kingdom is the Lord's. To suppose so is entirely to misunderstand the prophets; it is to make wholly inexplicable the ideas prevailing even among the disciples of our Lord,—ideas which they express, when they put such questions to Him as this: "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?" We must read such language in the prophets literally, if we are to comprehend their meaning, and the sense in which all who heard them understood them. One school of interpreters in our day holds that, seeing this is unmistakably their meaning, their predictions regarding Israel shall certainly be fulfilled. That people must be again restored to their own land.

So far, we must ally ourselves with this class of interpreters. They rightly perceive the meaning of the prophets; and that other school of interpreters, who contend that the prophets are merely using symbolical language for New Testament things, cannot be considered as doing justice to them. It is another question, however, how far the prophetic conceptions shall be literally fulfilled in the form in which, in that age, they were expressed. We must attend to any indications which subsequent revelation furnishes regarding the question, and inquire how far the principles of the New Testament dispensation lead us to suspect or infer that such prophecies have a certain dispensational form which may require to be stripped off; and that now, when the condition of the world has so greatly changed, and when the form of the kingdom of God has likewise altered, only the general idea contained in the prophecies may be expected to be fulfilled. It is of great importance to keep these questions separate,—the question what the prophets in their age meant, and the question of fulfilment now in this Christian age. The prophets construct for the perfect kingdom of God the

form it would have had, if it had come in their age. Each prophet does this.

There are three general points to be attended to—

First, all prophecy reposes upon the conditions of the world existing in the day of the prophet, and operates with the moral and other forces then prevailing.

Secondly, all prophecy refers also to the incoming of the perfect kingdom of God, which is spoken of in the Old Testament as the day of the Lord, or the coming of the Messiah, and in the New Testament, as His second coming. This kingdom of God expresses perfect moral and religious conceptions.

Thirdly, in all prophecy the connection between the prophet's present and this perfect future appears to the prophet's view virtually immediate. The forces operating in his own time seem, to his view, to issue directly in the incoming of God's glory. Thus in Isa. 9, the child born and son given appears amidst the desolations created by the Assyrian invasion; and in the later chapters the final glory of Israel follows closely upon the restoration from exile. And so in the Apocalypse, the second coming of the Lord follows close upon the back of the great occurrences of the seer's own age.

In point of fact, however, fulfilment does not quite follow this method of conception. The forces operating in the prophet's day do not immediately issue in the end. They become transmuted into other forces, or at least assume other forms; and the end is thrust back, great spaces of time being interposed between the prophet's present, and the end which he foresees. Yet the foreseen end remains, and the prophecy of it is not a failure. But, instead of coming in his day, it may be still to come in ours. His great religious truths concerning the kingdom of God abide. These eternal truths concerning the final condition of the kingdom of God are common to all the prophets. But each of them

combines these truths with the conditions of the world in his own day, and out of these conditions constructs anew the regenerated world. From one we may have but a few general, gigantic outlines, merely enough to suggest his conception; from another, a complete structure. But these constructions are not history, and may never become history. They are ideal, moral fabrics, reared of necessity out of the materials offered by the conditions of the world and the people of God lying around the prophet. The conceptions are universal, but the materials that serve to embody and express them change and decay, and have from age to age to be replaced, though the ideal abides, and is as perfect and heavenly in our day, as it was in that of the prophet. Just as we must estimate the Old Testament dispensation not by itself, but as a part only of a whole, so the Old Testament Scriptures are to be estimated not as independent, but as parts of a whole.

Thus, if we would *interpret* the prophet historically, we must realise to ourselves the condition of the world in his day, and the currents then running, and observe how he combines them with his great and unchangeable principles regarding the kingdom of God. If we would *apply* the prophet's words to our own day, we must substitute the state of the world now existing and the forces now prevailing which correspond to those of his day, and have arisen out of them, and again connect these with the prophet's thoughts of the kingdom of God, for these truths belong to us as well as to him. And those who follow us in changed conditions of the world will have to do the same.

Thus the following working rule arises:

If the prophet's words apply only to the Old Testament dispensation, and are to be fulfilled in it, they will, no doubt, be fulfilled literally in terms of the Old Testament dispensation.

If his prophecies refer to things only to be realised in

the New Testament dispensation, then we shall probably have to strip off from them the Old Testament form, which arose from the dispensation and time when the prophet lived, and look for their fulfilment in a way corresponding to the spirit of the New Testament dispensation and the altered conditions of the world. Hence, perhaps not much more than the great general conceptions of the prophecy will be realised, for these, after all, make up the prophecy.

Or, if a great general principle be expressed, capable of several fulfilments, that fulfilment which took place in Old Testament times will be in terms of the Old Testament economy, and that which will take place in New Testament times will be according to the spirit and principles of Christianity.

CHAPTER XII.

On the Interpretation of Natural Symbolism in Prophecy.

From our analysis of the poetical elements in the prophetical style, we found that it would not be wise to leap at once to the conclusion that only the main ideas underlying the poetical imagery need be expected to be realised in the fulfilment. The wiser and more reverent as well as more scientific method is to assert that along with the chief ideas, perhaps also some, or even much, of the formal details may be fulfilled. For these details are always ways of realising the ideas; and as they occurred to the prophet, it is quite possible that the ideas might really fulfil themselves in these precise forms. Besides, it is extremely difficult for us to say beforehand what are the essential elements of any prediction which we may expect to be realised, and what are mere adventitious incidents which must, in the fulfilment, be worked off and cast away. It is therefore better to keep our minds open, and not foreclose inquiry. And perhaps we should hold that, if any prediction has been found to have been fulfilled in the precise, concrete way predicted, as for example when Christ did enter Jerusalem, riding upon an ass, exactly as Zechariah had foretold, this precise detail ought to be considered of the essence of the prediction. This seems more reasonable than to say that Zechariah's prediction meant no more than that the Messiah should be lowly and peaceful, and that the symbolical act of riding upon an ass was merely the form in which the prophet

embodied the idea of his prediction, which would have been fulfilled in the character of the Messiah quite absolutely, although this act of entering Jerusalem had never taken place in His history.

And, further, as it is wise to take up a position of reserve, and not commit ourselves to any such principle as that only general ideas may be expected to be fulfilled, so it seems a fair thing, when considering any one prophecy, to keep before us the general scope of the Old Testament beliefs, in order to see whether, from this general scope, we may not draw some warrant to expect fulfilment in the precise form in which parts at least of the prophecy were expressed. For example, in connection with Isaiah's prediction of the complete ascendency of man over the lower creation in the renewed world, it will be of great advantage to inquire what the general representations of Scripture are regarding man's relation to the lower world. If we find the uniform representation to be that man's sin lost him the ascendency over the creatures natural to his position, then it will seem credible that his restoration to righteousness will bring with it the restoration of his lost supremacy. We ought to be very far from advocating a rigid and cast-iron uniformity of sentiment among the writers of the Old Testament, and of forcing one prophet into the Procrustes bed of another; but there is general harmony among them, one cast of doctrine being common to them all. They are all labouring on one temple of truth; and the work of one helps us largely to explain the work of another. Holding these general principles, we shall be open to light from every quarter. And if, as recommended in the first instance, we detach the general ideas from the prophecy, and assure ourselves that we shall at least find them in the fulfilment, we can afford to make the rest matter of unexcited, and, if necessary, pretty prolonged investigation.

A very large portion of the poetry of the prophetical

writers is drawn from nature. An attempt has been made to elevate some parts of this poetry into a distinct and more exalted category, to which the name of natural symbolism has been given. This symbolism of nature has been considered a species of hieroglyphic writing employed by the prophets, the key to which has to be sought in Scripture; and this key, when found, enables one to read off the meaning of any prophecy, such as the Apocalypse, for example, as one would 'any ordinary writing.' I thought it enough to deny the existence of any such symbolism, since its advocates advance in its behalf nothing that deserves the name of proof. But something more definite than mere denial is perhaps required. So I shall now add a little more on the subject. The question is: How shall we interpret those passages in the prophets where, in connection with man's judgment or salvation, great calamities or great blessings are represented as falling also on the material world and the irrational creatures? To make the question plain, let me quote some passages of both kinds. For instance, Amos says:

"The Lord shall roar from Zion,
And utter His voice from Jerusalem;
And the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn,
And the top of Carmel shall wither." [1]

And Hosea similarly declares Jehovah's judgment which is already imminent:

"Therefore the land shall mourn,
And every one that dwelleth therein shall languish,
With the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven;
Yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be swept away." [2]

Micah thus describes the effect of God's wrath:

"The mountains shall be molten under Him,
And the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire,

[1] Amos 1^2. [2] Hos. 4^3.

And as the waters that are poured over a precipice.
For the transgression of Judah is all this,
And for the sins of the house of Israel." [1]

We may also cite one passage from the Apocalypse, where the sixth seal opens the initial terrors of the end, the description being borrowed partly from Isaiah and partly from Joel: "The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the kings of the earth and the great men hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." [2] These passages may suffice to show Nature's participation in the judgments that fall on man. A few on the other side will show her participation in the blessings of his salvation. When Israel is restored, Amos says:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,
That the ploughman shall overtake the reaper,
And the treader of grapes him that soweth the seed;
And the mountains shall drop sweet wine." [3]

And Joel similarly declares:

"It shall come to pass in that day,
That the mountains shall drop down new wine,
And the hills shall flow with milk,
And all the brooks of Judah shall flow with water." [4]

And Isaiah:

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them;
And the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. . . .
No lion shall be there,
Nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon
It shall not be found there;
But the redeemed shall walk there." [5]

[1] Mic. 1^{2}. [2] Rev. 6^{12}. [3] Amos 9^{13}.
[4] Joel 3^{18}. [5] Isa. 35.

And in Rev. 21^5 it is said: "And He that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

Now, assuming, as we have done, that it is the real natural objects, sun, earth, and the like, and the real living creatures, lions, calves, fishes, etc., that are here spoken of, and not men and human things under these names, what is the explanation of their being so intimately concerned with the judgment or the salvation of man? Now, it is probable that a number of things may combine, or contribute, to explain this prophetic language.

For example, some of it may be explained from the sympathy of nature with God, which the poet deeply felt. God made nature, and, having made it, He must have thrown Himself into it. The pulsation of the divine heart, the drawing of the divine breath, must be felt in every atom of the universe. Much more must the working of the divine emotions of wrath and love. Now, the Old Testament writers being poets, give life to the earth and nature. To them this earth is a sentient creature. They appeal to it. "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.[1] Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.[2] Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and let all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: for He cometh to judge the earth, and the peoples in His truth."[3] The earth is sensitive and sympathetic. It can enter into all the moods of God. And as, in a family, the father's mood, whether of anger or of grace, is reflected immediately in shadow or in joy upon the children's faces, so all Nature shows upon her countenance a correspondence with the moods of her Creator. She mourns, or rejoices, as He is angry, or gracious.

Again, a certain amount of the imagery in question may be due to a feeling on the poet's part of Nature's

[1] Jer. 22^{29}. [2] Isa. 1^2. [3] Ps. 96^{11-13}.

sympathy with man, so that she mourns in his afflictions and rejoices in his joy. And even more may be due to that reflection of our own feelings, which we throw at all times over Nature. When a gloom oppresses our own minds, the same gloom somehow seems to envelop all things about us; as, on the contrary, the sunshine of our own feelings lights up everything else. And when the prophet beheld or conceived his people, or the kingdom of God, or his brethren of mankind, dissolving under the awful wrath of God, the catastrophe reflected itself to him also in nature, and the whole system of things seemed breaking up in terrible throes and convulsions. Such explanations as these would allow of only subjective truth to these pictures of natural confusion or natural restitution. But it is certain that, in this way, justice would not be done to many parts of Scripture. And, besides, this is left unexplained, why we do take Nature into our confidence, when glad or sorrowful; and why she is so intimately connected with us that our sorrow immediately envelops her in gloom, and our gladness immediately brightens her up. It is probably this very connection which lies at the root of the prophetical pictures and explains them; and if this be the case, it is also probable that Nature, being one with man, will at last share both in his judgment and his salvation; and thus these prophetic delineations will receive objective verification.

The last point raises the question, What does Scripture teach regarding the nature of the connection between the earth and man? And the former point raises the question, What does Scripture teach of the nature of the relation between the world and God? What kind of constitution, according to Scripture, is the constitution of the universe? Is it, as Scripture regards it, a physical or a moral constitution? The two questions run somewhat into one another, and the second may receive an answer if we look for a little at the first. The Old Testament has a consistent

testimony to bear on this question throughout. But this testimony is given in great fulness in several passages, such as Gen. 1, Ps. 104, and Ps. 8.

The statement with which the history of the world commences is: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," *i.e.* the world or the universe. To the Hebrew mind, however, such a conception of the universe as we have now attained could not occur. To his mind the earth was the world, and the visible heavens were closely connected with it. Other sidereal systems were unknown; the world, or the heavens and the earth, was simply the earth with its visible heavens. These introductory words in Genesis, then, state that the world, the heavens and the earth, began to exist, and began through God's creating them.

Again, the statement that "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters," contains two points—*first,* the form in which the heavens and the earth were, when created, was a watery chaos. A great ocean enveloped the solid parts of creation; and the surface of this primary ocean was what appeared. When we use the term 'chaos,' we must not so use it as to imply that the elements of creation, the solid and the fluid, were confused together. The solid were covered with an abyss, or expanse of waters. *Second,* over this ocean of water the Spirit of God, the Spirit of life and order, presided, educing life out of it. This life-giving Spirit of God was in no way involved in the watery chaos. He brooded over it, as the bird does over the egg, with vital efficacy. Thus the introductory statement covers the first two verses: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters." Others make the connection somewhat different: "In the beginning, when God created the heavens

and the earth, the earth was without form," etc. At all events, the representation of Scripture is that the newly-created world was enveloped in an ocean of water; and, of course, water means water—not a mixture of solids with water—not mud. This is verified by the parallel passage in Ps. 104:

"He based the earth upon her foundations,
That she should not be removed for ever.
Thou coveredst her with the deep as with a garment;
The waters stood above the mountains."

There was no confusion of the solid and the liquid elements; the waters enveloped the solid earth, standing even above the mountains. But there is an older parallel to Gen. 1 than Ps. 104. The cosmogony of Gen. 1 is not the peculiar possession of the Hebrew people; it is a heritage of other Semitic nations. Fragments of a similar system have been discovered in the clay tablets of Assyria. Unfortunately only those processes coming under the first and fourth creative days have been discovered. But enough remains to confirm the view that the first state of the created world was regarded as a chaos of waters involved in darkness:

"When above the heavens were not yet named"
(*i.e.* did not exist as a distinct province of the world),
"And below, the earth was without a name,
The limitless abyss was their generator,
And the chaotic sea she who produced them all."

Consequently those harmonists of science and Bible creation who introduce a great space between vv.[1, 2], and consider the words, "and the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep," to refer to some cataclysm comparatively recent, do so not only at the expense of the Hebrew language, but at the expense of the general testimony of Scripture and of historical tradition among the Semitic nations.

Such being the primary state of chaos in which the world was when created in the beginning, the passage goes on to show how order and life were educed out of this disorder. This process consists of six successive steps, made in as many days. Each result is regarded as the effect of a voluntary, conscious act of God, who said, "Let there be," and there was. We ought perhaps to regard these results as all operations of God's Spirit of life and order that was described as brooding over the primary ocean. At all events, the results are all distinct effects of the creative will of God directed to the particular production of each of them. Of these 'Let there be's' there are a perfect number, namely, *seven*. The six steps are probably divisible into two sets of three each, the former referring more to inanimate things, and the second more to things having life. But this is of less importance.

The first step was the creation of light: "God said, Let there be light: and there was light"—the first day. Light and darkness are often regarded as distinct things in the Old Testament. In Isaiah, Jehovah says: "I make light and create darkness."[1] And Job is asked:

> "Where is the way where light dwelleth?
> And as for darkness, where is the place thereof,
> That thou shouldst go to the bounds thereof,
> And know the path to the house thereof?"[2]

The second step was the creation of the firmament dividing between the waters enveloping the earth and the waters of the heavens. The firmament is regarded here as a solid expanse or dome, described elsewhere as being strong as a molten mirror.[3] Through this solid dome there is a channel cut for the rain-floods which pour down from on high upon the earth.[4] Elsewhere this dome is described as reposing its circular rim upon the earth, or the great ocean circumambient

[1] Isa. 45^{7}.
[2] Job 38^{19}.
[3] Job 37^{18}.
[4] Job 38^{25}.

of the earth.[1] The description is entirely ocular; the firmament is nothing but an illusion of the eye. This was the work of the second day. That the firmament is regarded as a solid expanse is manifest, because it is distinctly said to divide between the waters above and below it. When creation arose, the whole was covered with one vast ocean. Heaven and earth were not yet separated; the complex whole was not yet divided. This division was effected by the creation of the firmament which divided the waters into two oceans,—one a heavenly ocean above the firmament, the other, an earthly ocean below it.

In Ps. 104 the operations of these two days are combined together:

"O Lord, Thou art very great;
Thou art clothed with honour and majesty:
Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment;
Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain;
Who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters;
Who maketh the clouds His chariot;
Who walketh upon the wings of the wind."

God is light,—it is His garment. Where He is, it must be. It is the first of the works of God. Light is the first condition of order, of the existence of things distinct from one another, as in the beautiful passage in Job where the effect of the dawn upon the earth, covered with the darkness of night, is compared to the effect of the seal impressed upon the clay, causing all things to stand out in clear-cut distinctness.[2] But in Scripture light is the first step in moral order, it is almost a moral agent. In that same passage of Job, it is represented as seizing the corners of the covering of the earth, and shaking the wicked out of it. The creation of light, therefore, was the first great step in the formation of an orderly, moral world.

[1] Job 26. [2] Job 38^{14}.

The next step, on the third day, was the removal of the ocean from the earth's surface, the division of its face into seas and dry land, and the production of vegetation. Now, here again it is of the utmost consequence to be true to the author's language. "The dry land He called earth, and the waters He called seas," *i.e.* the seas we see with our eyes, and which the author saw with his. Seas really mean what we so call, and so does dry land. Seas do not mean mud in which

> "Dragons of the prime
> Tore each other in their slime."

Further, his division of vegetation into classes—(1) herbs; (2) plants, *i.e.* all vegetation, such as grasses, grains, flax, etc.; and (3) fruit trees, shows that what he describes is in his view what we call the vegetable kingdom in all its forms. He had no knowledge of an age of cryptogamous plants. It is not the world under the surface that he describes, but the world as it appeared to his eyes. What the author describes the origin of is the world as he knew it, with its divisions of seas and dry land. This state of creation is beautifully described in Ps. 104:

> "Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment;
> The waters stood above the mountains.
> At Thy rebuke they fled;
> At Thy voice of thunder they hasted away.
> The mountains rise up, the valleys go down,
> Unto the place which Thou hast founded for them.
> Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over;
> That they turn not again to cover the earth."

And then the production of vegetation is described as due to springs and rain:

> "He sendeth the springs into the valleys,
> Which run among the mountains.
>
> . . . . .

He watereth the hills from His chambers;
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Thy works.
He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
And herb for the service of man;
That he may bring forth food out of the earth:
And wine that maketh glad the heart of man,
And oil to make his face shine,
And bread which strengtheneth man's heart."

This Psalm furnishes a singularly beautiful as well as thoughtful commentary on the history of creation, casting light on the order as well as on the teleology of the separate steps. The goal set before the Creator is an orderly constitution, where living creatures and moral beings are to subsist. The first condition of this order is light; the next is the division between the earth and the heavens; and the third is the stable equilibrium of the elements of the earth, land and water; and the production of nourishment for the creatures to be placed upon it.

The fourth step, the first of the second series of three, is the creation of the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, and stars, and the placing of them in the firmament of the heavens, to rule the day and the night, and to be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years, and to give light upon the earth. The creation of the luminaries on the fourth day corresponds to the creation of light on the first day. This has always been considered one of the most remarkable points in this cosmogony,—remarkable, because light is conceived as in some sense independent of the heavenly bodies, and because the creation of these bodies is so far down in the scale. These things are remarkable, although to call them an anticipation of scientific theories of light is perhaps too much. It is very singular that in the Assyrian cosmogony the origin of the heavenly bodies appears to occupy a place equally far down in the series. This, however, can readily be explained

so far as that cosmogony is concerned. The first half of the series concerns itself with inanimate things; the second half with the world of life. The heavenly bodies were considered animated, or at all events they were connected with certain gods, which they either were, or represented. Hence they introduce the second series, that of living beings. This being so, the Hebrew writer has preserved the original order, as it came to his hand, though, of course, he has removed all traces of false worship. But though this coincidence between the two cosmogonies be very remarkable, the place of the heavenly luminaries at the threshold of life, especially moral life, is most suitable. Throughout the passage, and indeed throughout Old Testament Scripture, the earth is virtually the universe; the heavens are part of it. They belong to the earth, and are estimated only as they subserve its interests. So here the heavenly bodies do not come into consideration, except in so far as they are connected with orderly life upon the earth. The 104th Psalm again furnishes the commentary:

"He appointed the moon for seasons;
And the sun knoweth his going down.
Thou makest darkness, and it is night:
Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.
The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together,
And lay themselves down in their dens.
Man goeth forth unto his work
And to his labour until the evening.
O Lord, how manifold are Thy works!
In wisdom hast Thou made them all."

The heavenly bodies come into consideration here simply as regulating the orderly, and especially the moral life of man upon the earth. They are for signs and for seasons—probably religious seasons, the new moon, and full moon—and for days and for years. Consequently, they are repre-

sented as appointed immediately before the dawn of animated existence.

It is to be noticed that the fifth day was the creation of all marine creatures, and of birds. Let the *waters* bring forth; now, waters always mean waters. God blessed them, and said, "Be fruitful, and fill the waters in the seas." There is no reference to amphibians—great reptiles leading a double existence. Then the sixth day was the creation of the terrestrial fauna, living creatures,—beasts of the field, cattle, etc., *i.e.* all creatures living on dry land. And, finally, the creation of man, towards which the whole previous progression was moving. The creation of man takes place in a way different from that of the other creatures. In regard to them God said, "Let the *earth* bring forth grass," "Let the *waters* bring forth abundantly the living creature, and let the *earth* bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and the creeping thing, and beasts of the earth." In regard to the creation of man, the Lord deliberates with Himself. Man is the immediate work of God's own hand, and is made in the image of God,—a person, self-conscious, with a moral being, and a spiritual nature.

Finally, having completed His work of creation, God rested. He ceased working, and He looked with satisfaction upon the work of His hand; and He brought man, made in His image, into the fellowship of His rest. The creation attains its before-appointed end in the fellowship of man and God, in the covenant communion, the sign and seal of which is the Sabbath. It is important to notice this. The passage is not an abstract account of creation. It is an introduction to that covenant fellowship which man has with God in the rest of the Sabbath. Creation is a sphere for this fellowship of man and God,—this fellowship was the goal of it,—and there lay thus in creation itself a prophecy of the end—of that which should be in the final perfection. This is the widest Messianic conception,—reflected again in Ps. 8.

This history of creation is full of beauty. It has an unparalleled dignity and simplicity, a profound and pure theism, and a singular wisdom and insight into nature as a moral constitution, all of whose parts subserve the higher moral and religious life of man. It also shows a fine appreciation of the difference between the higher and the lower scales of being, and represents them as coming into existence in a gradual manner, and in an ascending scale. But is there anything to be called science in it further than this? Is it a real account of how things actually came about, in any other sense than that it is a wise glimpse into things, now that they actually exist, and a clear appreciation of what is higher and lower in the scale of life, and how each part of nature subserves the interests of that part which is above it? Does not the simple and beautiful teleology of the 104th Psalm cast light on the order of steps observed? We perceive that the scheme is made up, first, of a few great antitheses that strike the eye, light and darkness, earth and heaven, dry land and water. Then there is the preparation for life, the vegetation upon the earth; then the preparation for moral and religious life, for that orderly, moral constitution of things which was aimed at from the beginning,—the appointing of the heavenly bodies to rule the day and the night, to regulate the great religious seasons, and the fixed terms of life, and man's moral existence. And, finally, the successive creations of all the various orders of life: (1) the aquatic creatures and birds; (2) then the terrestrial creatures; (3) and, lastly, man,—in whom God's work of creation returned as it were to God Himself, and He met His own work in fellowship.

The division into six days, or steps, has been a cause of much conflict of opinion. To bring the creative process into harmony with science, it has been thought necessary to consider these days to be æons, vast periods of time. There can be no doubt that the conception of the Hebrew writer is that the days were natural days, bounded by dawn and dark-

ness. The Creator's week of work was identical with that of man. The writer has imposed this conception upon the Creator's operations. The seventh day, on which God rested, is identical with the day on which man rests, not symbolical or typical of it; for it is said, "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because in it He rested from all His work." The meaning of שׁבת might be merely that on the seventh day God ceased from working. But in Ex. 20^{11} another word is used (נוּחַ) which does not mean to cease, but to repose. Hence the meaning must be: on it, that is, during it, God reposed.

It is remarkable that in the Assyrian cosmogony this division into days does not appear. But it is more remarkable that, in the form of the Decalogue given in Deuteronomy, the obligation to keep the Fourth Commandment is not grounded on this sixfold division of the Creator's work, but on the fact that He redeemed His people from Egypt. We must, no doubt, suppose that the commandments, as written on the two Tables, were less extensive than the form in which we now have them in Exodus and Deuteronomy. The reasons given for the keeping of the commandments are probably later, for they are various. Further, the division into days has no significance in Ps. 104. It is only in Exodus that we find the expression "for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth." This statement in Exodus is doubtless a later addition, since the division into days is thereby made to subserve the interests of the Sabbath. But in all probability we should regard the six-day division here as belonging to the orderly conception of the author. He has thrown the great operations of the Creator into this conception of a week of work. The days seem no essential part of the cosmogony, except as part of a formal disposing of the divine operations under the conception of a week. The bearing on the Sabbath, of course, still remains; for God worked and rested, and so man is to labour and rest with God in His covenant communion of which the Sabbath is

the sign. It may seem that, by making the sixfold division merely ideal, we lose the ground for the Sabbath. I suspect the difficulty belongs to all theories. I suspect science will not concede any sixfold division in which there is any distinction of the periods from one another. The sixfold division is ideal in any circumstances. But we have still left the division of work and rest; and then the general bearing on the Sabbath as a rest, if not as a rest in the proportion of one to six, also remains.

But, leaving such details as these, I desire to point out that creation, so far as Scripture deals with it, is a unity of which man is the head. Creation began and progressed towards him, and after him nothing was created. In the Old Testament, the universe is virtually the earth, the world of mankind, the visible system of things of which man is the head; as it is expressed in the 8th Psalm, "What is man! Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and set him over the work of Thy hands."

The great conception of the Old Testament is that the world is a moral constitution. Behind the physical world is God, a free, conscious, moral being; on this side of it, and over it, is man, another free, moral being. The world is but the means of their intercourse. It is this moral character of its whole constitution, which explains how the external world is always drawn into the relations of God and man, and reflects these relations according as they are normal or disturbed,—rejoicing and blossoming like the rose in man's redemption, and falling into dissolution in man's destruction under God's wrath.

CHAPTER XIII.

Typology in Nature and Revelation.

Typology is a species of prophecy. But this species of prophecy occurs even in nature. Hence, before entering on any examination of typology in Scripture, we must first turn our attention to what has been called, and rightly called, typology in nature.

Of this perhaps three things may be said: *first*, that certain forms, that is, certain clusters or combinations of peculiarities, are greatly prevalent in nature, appearing in very diverse spheres; *second*, that the degree in which these forms or combinations of peculiarities appear is very different in different spheres; and *third*, that the degrees of development in which such forms appear are not arbitrary or promiscuous, but progressive.

The word *type* means a stroke or *stamp*, that is, a peculiar and recognisable form impressed on things. There is in such a stamp or form an *idea;* thus there is the idea of a lateral organ in the fore part of the body. This idea is realised in the fin of a fish. It is also realised in the foreleg of an animal; and, finally, in the arm of a man. These are all spheres in which this idea is exhibited; and this idea of such an organ, an organ of this peculiar kind, is a type. Now, what is most interesting about such a type is not that it is found in several spheres, though that is interesting; nor yet that it is found in various degrees or stages of advancement towards what can easily be seen to be the perfection of the form, or the complete exhibition of the idea, as the arm of a man is evidently

a much more perfect instrument of the kind than the fin of a fish, though this is also interesting,—the most interesting thing about these types is that the type contains a kind of vitality in it, by which it advances steadily from a less degree of perfection to greater and greater degrees of perfection. It grows. The degree of its development can be measured by time. A more complete realising of the idea of the type which is the final cause of the combination, will never be found to precede in time a less complete realising of it.

It seems nature's way to work typically,—to move along on certain forms, and to move always from less to more. A perfect form, found anywhere, may be held to imply an antecedent imperfect form. It is not God's way to introduce any great work suddenly. When any design of His is realised, it is manifest that He has been from the beginning moving toward this; and in many cases the several movements can be traced. His purposes are not realised all at once. It is not that any attempt of His fails, but that He attempts but little at a time. His idea cannot grow, but He who sees the end from the beginning seems under some law to Himself to exhibit the beginning growing into the perfection of the end. If one may say so, evolution, development, is beautiful to Him, as He has made it beautiful to us. To show us the perfect at once, affects us little. To see the imperfect gradually filling out, and rounding into the complete, is grateful to our minds. Is it also pleasant to His? Or, to Him who sees all at once, can growth be anything? Is the difference between the oak expanding through centuries and the acorn appreciable to Him? What He is who works, we cannot know. But we can know, in some degree, what and how He works. And we see that, as influences, impressed by us on the elements which He has made, propagate themselves by widening waves and pulsations, so His own arts advance from less to more continually. Thus God's manifestations are not sudden. What He will accom-

plish at the last, He accomplishes first on a smaller scale. The way of the Lord is always typified. It exhibits a struggle towards complete embodiment, rising as it were through hindrances into forms imperfect, until, by succession and victorious advancement, it reaches perfection.

It is now known that the great variety in God's works is caused, not so much by the multitude of separate things which He has made, as by a very great diversity in the degree of embodiment of a few fundamental thoughts. Creation rose gradually up to man, and even the separate organs of man are typified in many imperfect shapes, before they reach the human. The fin of a whale is a stage in the development of the arm of a man. The brain of a fish is identical with one stage of growth of the human brain. "Nature," says a well-known writer, "in constructing this curious organ in man, first lays down a grooved cord, as the carpenter lays down the keel of his vessel; and on this narrow base the perfect brain, as month after month passes by, is gradually built up, like the vessel from the keel. First, it grows up into a brain closely resembling that of a fish; a few additions more impart the perfect appearance of the brain of a bird; it then develops into a brain exceedingly like that of a mammiferous quadruped; and, finally, expanding atop and spreading out its deeply corrugated lobes till it projects widely over the base, it assumes its unique character as a human brain. Radically such at the first, it passes through all the inferior forms, from that of the fish upwards, as if each man were in himself not the microcosm of the old fanciful philosopher, but something greatly more wonderful,—a compendium of all animated nature, and of kin to every creature that lives." Or, as another writer expresses it: "All the parts and organs of man had been sketched out in anticipation, so to speak, in the inferior animals; and the recognition of an ideal exemplar in the vertebrated animals proves

that the knowledge of such a being as man must have existed, before man appeared. For the divine mind which planned the archetype also foreknew all its modifications. The archetypal idea was manifested in the flesh long prior to the existence of those animal species that actually exemplify it. To what natural laws or secondary causes the orderly succession and progression of such organic phenomena may have been committed, we are yet ignorant. But if, without derogation of the divine power, we may conceive the existence of such ministers, and personify them by the term Nature, we learn from the past history of our globe that she has advanced with slow and steady steps, guided by the archetypal light, amidst the wreck of worlds, from the first embodiment of the vertebrate idea under its old ichthyic vestment, until it became arrayed in the glorious garb of the human form."

Now, it is certainly to be expected, when one considers that the same God is the author both of the scheme of nature and of grace, and remembers the many analogies of other kinds which the two schemes exhibit, that there will be an analogy here also. For this is one of the broadest and most characteristic of God's ways, to move up through imperfect forms to that which is perfect. The man grows from the child. The tree is cast into the ground a seed. The light shineth more and more unto the perfect day. We should wonder if God's perfect kingdom and glory did not first appear dim and in broken outline, and gradually increase in clearness and sharpness of contour, till it stood out, luminous and defined, as the sun in the sky. And this expectation of a typology in religion will not be interfered with by any difference of opinion as to the relation of religion to nature. Indeed, seeing it is certain human conceptions that we are speaking about, it will not be of consequence should you conclude that there is no real object that answers to them, just as

the fact of a progress in nature from less to greater perfection remains, whether you consider this progress to be caused by God, or due to something else.

Those who deny that there is any specific distinction between the sphere of revelation and nature, holding that they are not two schemes, but only parts of one scheme and specifically the same, must on their own ground be all the readier to admit a typology in religion, or in what is called revelation, seeing it unquestionably exists in nature, which, according to them, is specifically the same as revelation. Those, again, who believe revelation or grace to be a thing specifically distinct from nature, will admit a typology in the one, partly because they find it in the other. For, though grace be specifically distinct from nature, they have one author; and He may be supposed to work on the same methods, though He is not doing the same thing, grace being also His work and in addition to nature, though not necessarily diverse from nature. Moreover, such men will admit a typology because it is clearly seen to be the method of revelation. Thus, on all hands, a typology in revelation will be admitted to be probable.

So great a thing as Christianity, so wonderful a manifestation as Christ, wonderful on any scheme or explanation of His life,—very wonderful if He was really what apostles and evangelists describe Him to have been; almost more wonderful if He was not this, but was such as to cause men to imagine Him to be so; if, without being historically such as He is spoken of, He both raised such a conception as is embodied in His historic life, and led His contemporaries, and so many since, to believe in that historic life,—so wonderful a manifestation as Christ, whatever be the true conception of Him, must have had prefigurements, very numerous and going back to the most ancient days. If He was, in truth, a manifestation of God in human flesh, then so great a thing in the life of God, if we may

so speak, must have had many antecedent lesser manifestations. If Christ was not this, but only a manifestation of man, a flower among the many flowers of humanity, or rather one flower appearing at last on that melancholy aloe, barren for so many millenniums, the stock of mankind, even then He cannot have come unheralded. There must have been seen many a time, on this barren stock, an effort, as it were, to flower, the putting out of energies, and the gathering together of forces, and the formation of what seemed going to be an efflorescence, though native vigour was wanting to mature it, and it came to nought. Or even if He were less than this, no real thing at all, but only a conception, or only the imperfect cause of a perfect conception, then still both this cause and this conception, on a lower form, must often have appeared before. And so the prophet Micah speaks: "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."[1] And the writers of the Old Testament certainly consider themselves in the midst of things not destined to abide, but waxing old and ready to perish, and they look forward to the future as something greatly more glorious that what was present. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee, . . . the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising," is the language with which the prophet addresses the Church of the latter days.

And no less certainly do the writers of the New Testament consider their dispensation as the realising of all that towards which the Old had been moving. There was a goal before the Old, and it had been reached in the New. If perfection had been by the Levitical priesthood,[2] then another priest would not have been spoken of. Christ is the end of

[1] Mic. 5^2. [2] Heb. 7^{11}.

the law,—no doubt here *termination*, though, if you say 'end' in the sense of final cause, you make it even more emphatic. He is then the end purposed of old—"for righteousness to every one that believeth."[1] "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil."[2] The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints, is Christ, "who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last days for you."[3] The divine idea was Christianity. Christ brought it in, through many degrees of realisation. He prefigured the whole of it, and each of its parts. It is the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the Old Testament dispensation was imperfect, and that the New dispensation is perfect, the one being the perfection of the things —such as revelation, and atonement in all its elements— which in the other were imperfect. Thus, in general, there can be no doubt that we can speak of a typology in the dispensations of religion. There are certain forms common to them all, and these forms rise through various degrees of completeness, till they are perfect in the last.

Now, this is the kind of typology found in nature, and it is certainly also found in the dispensations of revelation. These are so related to one another, that, while they all embody the same elements or combinations, but varying in degree, the earlier embodies them in a degree inferior to the later. But the question here rises: Is this the kind of typology that Scripture itself says exists, or that writers on typology say exists? Perhaps the answer to that question would be best furnished by an inquiry into the kind of imperfection that exists in the earlier dispensation. There will, no doubt, exist reasons in God's mind for that law, which He seems to observe, of beginning things small, and gradually, through advance of time, leading them up to

[1] Rom. 10^{4}. [2] Matt. 5^{17}. [3] Rom. $16^{25f.}$, 1 Pet. 1^{20}.

perfection. In the external world, this process allows of great variety, and variety on the basis of a few forms,—diversity and diversity in unity, both of which things are pleasing to the mind. It likewise exhibits growth, which is also very pleasing to the mind, and there may be other hidden reasons.

In revelation, however, this other reason can be seen, namely, the state of mind of those to whom the revelation was made. They were ignorant, and could not take in all the truth at once. It had both to be broken down to them and administered in fragments, and it had to be cleared of its abstractness, or clothed in some material form. God spake unto the fathers bit by bit (πολυμερῶς) and in divers forms (πολυτρόπως), which I suppose may refer to the modes of the things spoken as well as to the modes of speaking them. They were robed in manifold, many-coloured garments: in great acts of redemption, like the deliverance from Egypt, or of judgment as the Flood; in great leaders and commanders of the people, like Moses and David; in great conflicts with the heathen, that is, with what was not the Church, and such like. God taught the world in its infancy by signs and pictures, and ideas embodied as men, or creatures, or things. Like early writing among men themselves, God's early revelation was pictorial. The dispensations antecedent to Christianity are so many picture-books, great systems of hieroglyphs, facts, things, and men.

What seems most characteristic of the old dispensation is the embodiment of all its truths. These truths were not taught; they were acted. They were not received; they were again acted. God chose, elected Abraham; and He took him away from among the people about him, and separated him, putting him into a strange land. Abraham believed God, became God's, renounced the life of men, left the world, and ceased to lead its life. God redeemed Israel, and actually brought them up out of Egypt. They were redeemed, and they neither

felt the taskmaster's chains and stripes, nor heard his voice any more. Of course, Abraham's call was a real religious thing, and so was Israel's redemption. These were not events in God's providence, but acts of God's grace. Abraham did not settle in Canaan, as an emigrant settles in Australia. Nor did Israel come up out of Egypt, merely as an oppressed nationality. All these were great religious crises; and they differed from such things now in this, that they were also embodied and exhibited on the platform of history, as real, outward transactions. They were, as we say, also presented symbolically.

This symbolical presentation of the truth, together, of course, with the gradual revelation of it,—its presentation piecemeal,—forms the real distinction between the two dispensations, and lays the foundation for a typology. The imperfection of the old lies chiefly in these two things: *First*, truth is given in detached pieces, in chips, and facets, and aspects, not in its unity; and so it may happen that many of the pieces, though belonging to one man, will not be known to do so, but be considered unrelated, for example, a reigning and a suffering Messiah. *Second*, the individual pieces of the truth so presented are generally embodied in a material form, in some action, such as washing, for purification; or in some machine, as the tabernacle in the midst of the people for God's dwelling there; or in some person, as Moses, the leader and redeemer of the people. Sometimes the truth will be explained apart from the symbol, but generally the people were left to draw it out themselves. And these two things are worth noticing, namely, *first*, that it was chiefly the doctrines of salvation or the relations of men to God, and what He did to introduce them into these relations, that were symbolised in this way. *Second*, in the Jewish economy the things which had formerly received a temporary and occasional embodiment, such as judgment symbolised in the Flood, fellowship with God in His walk

with Enoch and some of the patriarchs,—all these truths received, in the stable commonwealth of Israel, a steady and permanent embodiment either in the general relations of the theocracy as a whole to the world outside, or in its institutions and their relations to one another, such as the temple services and the great offices of king and prophet. The only difference was that now the same embodiment of the truth continued permanent. The embodiment of a truth is usually called a symbol.

Thus there was a twofold inferiority in the Old Testament revelation to the New, as is expressly stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews: first, the Old was fragmentary, the truth being given piecemeal (πολυμερῶς), bit by bit, in aspects only; and, second, the Old was earthly, the truth not being bare, simple, universal, but clothed, mixed, and particular; bodily, not spiritual. Thus, by way of example, the Old Testament knows nothing of our abstraction, a Church; it knows only a concrete nationality, Israel, which is the people of God. It knows nothing of that abstraction called by us the world,—that atmosphere, set of principles, line of action, circle of feeling, which we abstract from existing society, and so name. It knows of concrete, existing heathen nations like Edom and Egypt, and most of all Babylon, which last perfectly realised the idea of a godless, violent, destructive world-power, and which therefore re-appears in the New Testament as the name of heathen, persecuting Rome. It knows nothing of unlocal privileges of a believer; it has not yet reached the truth uttered by Christ, that neither in Jerusalem nor yet in the mountain of Samaria need men worship the Father, if only they that worship Him worship in spirit and in truth. Even the most spiritual of the Psalmists longs for the earthly temple, and thinks the swallow which may make her nest in God's altars happy in comparison of him who is far away in exile, and unable to see with his eyes God's holy place.

All things were expressed materially. The spiritual things were there, as they are with us, only there was also the bodily form; and the two were not considered capable of separation. There is no mention made in the Old Testament of a Church whose local seat is not Mount Zion. Even in the most expansive times of the Church's influence, Zion shall be the Church's centre, and the nations shall flow unto it, and many people shall say, "Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the house of the Lord"; and the state of highest attainment of the Church on earth is called the new Jerusalem, the gates of which shall not be shut day nor night, and into which shall pour, in uninterrupted stream, the wealth of the Gentiles, with their kings in procession. Nowhere in the Old Testament is any mention made of a Church within which the Jews and the Gentiles are amalgamated in one body and undistinguished. The Gentiles join themselves to the Church, but they remain an element that never coalesces. The kingdom of the Messiah is described as an earthly monarchy. This is so much the way of its representation that it is on all hands admitted; and interpreters merely differ as to the way in which this method of presenting it should be understood. Some think it is the way in which it shall yet be literally realised, when the kingdom is fully set up at the coming again of the Lord. Others maintain that prediction merely took this form, because, at the time it was made, the kingdom of God had such an earthly form.

This peculiarity of the Old Testament dispensation, that its truths were embodied, was not a peculiarity characteristic only of some portions of it. It was universally characteristic. The truth that God was in the midst of His people, for example, was embodied in the tabernacle, and His presence was visible in the Shekinah or cloud of smoke above the cherubim. The truth that man can draw near to God by a mediator was embodied in the entrances of the priest into the

holy place and into the holiest of all, carrying in the blood and the incense, which is the prayers of saints, and bringing out the blessing, even righteousness, from the God of their salvation. The truth that the mediator must be himself holy, was embodied in the frequent washings of the priests in their robes of linen clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints. The truth that obedience to God's law is needful to retain the privileges of His grace, and that disobedience involves expulsion from His fellowship, was embodied in the relations of the people to the land of Canaan, and in their banishment and exile when they fell away from the true principles of the religion of Jehovah. The truth that remission of sins is by the shedding of blood, was embodied in the animal sacrifices.

It would not be easy to state a truth of religion which was not so embodied. Even the more subtle and hidden doctrines of the religion of Christ, such as that He is head of the Church, or, in other words, that God governs His Church not immediately, but by a mediatorial king, was embodied in the monarchy of Israel: "I have set My king upon My holy hill of Zion." The Davidic king was head of God's visible Church—the people Israel. And that God does not reveal truth immediately to the body of the Church, but employs another, a messenger, a prophet, was taught by the prophetic office. In all these cases the great truths of God's relation to men were taught in the Old as much as in the New, but they were taught bit by bit. In all these offices and all these rites, into how many fragments was that Unity, Christ, split?

These truths were also taught in a material, earthly manner. And both of these things constituted an inferiority. The material, ritualistic shape of the teaching, the apostle does not hesitate to characterise as 'rudimentary,' speaking of it as 'the rudiments of the world' and 'as

weak and beggarly rudiments.'[1] And the writer to the Hebrews characterises the Old as 'worldly' and 'fleshly': "Now verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary (*κοσμικόν*)";[2] "being only (with meats and drinks, and divers washings) carnal ordinances (*σαρκός*) imposed until a time of reformation."[3] Thus there might be few of the principles of the Christian religion which a Jewish believer might not understand as general religious principles, although he might have the dimmest possible idea of the Christianity of them. He might not know that all these offices, king, priest, and such like, were to be united in one Person; much less that that Person, who was King and Priest, was also to be, Himself, the bleeding victim offered on the altar. What probably was most of all wanting to the Jewish believers was the appreciation of these truths in their unity, and also the appreciation, though this may be but a corollary from the knowledge of their unity, of their future spirituality, and, if I may say so, of their disembodiment from the material forms in which, for the time, they were expressed.

Accordingly, the outstanding characteristic of the Old Testament dispensation was its materialness. It was a constitution in which all religious truths were materially embodied; that is, it was a *symbolical* religion. There were in every case two things, the *truth* and its *embodiment*. So far as the truths are concerned, they do not seem to differ from those in the New Testament, except that they appear more individually and in fragments. So far as the embodiment of them is concerned, it has almost entirely disappeared in the New Testament dispensation. There is no more a tabernacle, or Shekinah, no visible dwelling-place, no visible presence of God, no more divisions in the tabernacle, nor obstructions to access to God's presence. The whole paraphernalia of symbolism has disappeared.

[1] Gal. $4^{3,9}$. [2] Heb. 9^{1}. [3] Heb. 9^{10}.

Now, if we examine the truths in the old economy as they appeared in their rudiments, and as they are seen beginning to put themselves forth in yet undeveloped and imperfect forms, recognisable though immature, and only expressing themselves through a symbolism which must be called earthly or worldly; and if we again consider them as they are visible in the new economy, having reached perfection, and no longer clothed in the coarse forms of material things, but purely spiritual, we have something resembling the typology in nature. We have first the truths themselves, the ideas which we may call types, certain clusters of religious beliefs in combination; then, second, we have these imperfect in the old, the combination not complete, but only certain elements of it, the idea far from fully realised, but so realised that, even in the incomplete form, the perfect idea is suggested, so that one with skill may see to what the rudimentary germ will yet grow. Finally, in the New Testament, we have these perfect ideals realised, the rudiment having developed, in every case, into that of which it was the primary element. In all this we have something resembling the typology of nature; and therefore, even on this ground, it is not amiss to speak of a typology in Scripture.

CHAPTER XIV.

Typology in Scripture.

That there is a typology in nature has been already shown; and from the characteristics of that typology we inferred what would be the characteristics of the typology of revelation. We have now to consider, first, the Scripture terminology as regards types; and, second, the theological usage, so that we may ascertain how far these agree with the typology found in nature.

1. The Scripture terminology. The word *type*, τύπος, is from τύπτω, *to strike*, and means properly a *blow* or *stroke*, in which sense it does not occur in the New Testament; then the mark produced by a blow, the *print*, *impress* of the stroke; so in John 20^{25}, τὸν τύπον τῶν ἥλων, the *print* of the nails. The word is used, in classical Greek, of the *print* of teeth, the *mark* of a stripe, the *track* of a foot-step, the *stamp* on a coin, and the like. Very naturally, from meaning the *print* or *stamp* upon a thing, it came to include the thing itself with the stamp on it, or an object with a figure carved on it, and hence more generally a *figure* or image, as in Acts 7^{43}: "Ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, the *figures*—τοὺς τύπους—which ye made, to worship them." Again, by a slight advance, it is used more abstractly of a certain *form* or *method* in itself, without its being considered the impression or image of anything else. Thus the chief captain Lysias wrote to Felix a letter after this *manner:*

ἐπιστολὴν ἔχουσαν τὸν τύπον τοῦτον.[1] "Ye have obeyed from the heart that *form* of doctrine which was delivered you."[2] So also in classical Greek it is said that Io was changed εἰς βοὸς τύπον, into the *form* of a cow.

This last sense forms the point of transition to a new usage, in which the word, from expressing what was secondary and the result of imitation, comes to express what is primary and designed for imitation. Hence it may be translated *pattern*, *model*, or *exemplar*. Thus Phil. 3^{17}: "Mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample,"—καθὼς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς; 1 Thess. 1^{7}: "So that ye were *ensamples* to all that believe"; 2 Thess. 3^{9}: "To make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us"; and Moses was commanded to make the tabernacle according to the model or pattern showed him in the mount,—κατὰ τὸν τύπον, Acts 7^{44}, Heb. 8^{5}.

Finally, the term has another use, more general than any already adduced, in which it does not strictly express the imitation or reproduction of any form, nor yet any form presented for imitation, but merely that one thing has a general resemblance to another, or is, as we should say, an *analogue* of it. Thus 1 Cor. $10^{5.6}$: "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples,"—τύποι ἡμῶν, types, analogies of us, of our condition,—"to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." And again, v.^{11}: "Now these things happened to them for ensamples,"—τύποι, as types. And in Rom. 5^{14}, Adam is called τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος,—type, analogue of Him that was to come; for he stood in relations to men as to sin and death, analogous to those in which Christ stands to them as to righteousness and life.

The word antitype, ἀντίτυπος, of course, means corresponding to the τύπος. Now, if τύπος means, as it properly

[1] Acts 23^{25}. [2] Rom. 6^{17}.

does, something secondary, the print or impression of what is primary, *ἀντίτυπος* will, of course, express the primary, the thing producing the impression, or the thing that has been imitated. Again, if *τύπος* express the model for imitation, *ἀντίτυπος* will express the things made in imitation of the model. So in Heb. 9^{24}, Moses was shown in the mount a *τύπος* to be imitated, and he made the tabernacle and its arrangements according to it. Hence these latter are called *ἀντίτυπα.* Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the *figures* of the true *ἀντίτυπα,*—things made of and corresponding to the *τύπος* seen in the mount. But if there be merely a similarity or analogy between two things, that which is held primary, for whatever reason, will be called *τύπος*, and the secondary, *ἀντίτυπος.* Hence baptism is called antitype to the waters of the Flood,—"the antitype to which, baptism, doth also now save us,"—*ᾧ καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σώζει βάπτισμα*[1] (A.V.: "the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us").

In theological language, the *type* is the unreal similitude, and the antitype the corresponding reality. But this is not the scriptural usage, according to which *antitype* is what corresponds to the *type*, while *type* may be either the primary reality, to be embodied in an imitation, or that secondary imitation, in which the reality is embodied. According to the passage in Hebrews, the Christian realities, being the models after which the Old Testament figures were fashioned, ought to be called the *types*, and those Old Testament figures of them the *antitypes;* but this is the converse of the theological language. At the same time, Scripture usage does not seem consistent, as Scripture calls Adam the *type*, and not the antitype, of Christ, and the Old Testament saints in their experience the *types of us*, and not our antitypes.

[1] 1 Pet. 3^{21}.

Now, this somewhat lengthy investigation of words furnishes us with several ideas which we may consider scriptural. First, the idea of several spheres: one present, and perhaps more than one past. This present sphere is described as *us* in opposition to those who were *types* of us; as τὰ μέλλοντα, the things to come, and τὰ ἀληθινά, the true things, in opposition to certain things that existed for the time then being, and were only figures of the true. This present sphere is one; but it almost appears as if there were several past spheres of unequal, though perhaps concentric, circumference. For instance, the things of the present sphere seem described as τὰ μέλλοντα, in opposition to the Jewish economy, which did not itself possess these things, but only a σκιά or faint resemblance of them. Here the sphere opposed to the present is the law, or the Jewish dispensation. But when Christ is called in Romans ὁ μέλλων, and Adam ὁ τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, the contrast seems to be between the present and a greatly wider, earlier sphere, namely, the old humanity, which is contrasted with the new. It seems certainly the idea of the New Testament writers that God's dispensations proceed by developments that are parallel to one another.

A second idea, which indeed is involved in the other, is that the things in the one sphere have a resemblance to those in the other. There is such a correspondence, at least, that the things in the one sphere may be called analogous to those in the other sphere. This seems involved in the very words τύπος and ἀντίτυπος. But the resemblance is more clearly stated in reference to certain of the things, for those in the present sphere are called τὰ ἀληθινά, the *true things*, while the things that resemble them in the former were made after their fashion, mere imitations of them in material form. The Epistle to the Hebrews uses two words to express this idea, σκιά, shadow, and ὑπόδειγμα. It was necessary that the ὑποδείγματα

of the things in the heavens should be purified with these,—*i.e.* the animal sacrificial blood and the like,—but the heavenly things themselves, with better sacrifices than these. These *ὑποδείγματα*, translated *patterns*, are the things already called *ἀντίτυπα*, namely, the Old Testament material machinery, the imitations in matter of the realities that are Christian and spiritual. And again, 8^5: "There are priests that serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things,"—*ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ*. And again, 10^1: "Now the law having a *shadow* of good things to come, and not the very essence of them." I do not know how far we are entitled to press the term *shadow*, and argue that every shadow is projected by a substance; this shadow is the shadow of that substance. Perhaps more is not contained in the term than the idea of unsubstantial resemblance. The connection of the shadow with the substance it may not be intended to convey. The law, it is said, has a thin resemblance of the reality, but without the accessory idea that it is the coming reality that has cast its shadow before.

Third, another idea seems to be that the things in the former sphere were ordained with a view to the things of the latter or present sphere. Or, at any rate, it is evident that the things of the present sphere were the things in view at the beginning. This is evident, of course, to us now from actual occurrences. But it may be inferred from the nature of the case, for the things of this sphere are called the *true things*, which we must assume to have been the goal of all development and prior activity. Hence, if the perfect things were in view from the beginning, the former things may have been designed to suggest them to those then living; and from their nature they were, of course, well fitted to do this.

2. The theological terminology. Leaving now the usage of Scripture, we must look at the theological language in common use. And here three terms need to be defined,

namely, allegory, symbol, and type. An allegory is a fiction that teaches a moral truth. A symbol is a fact that teaches a moral truth. A type is a fact that teaches a moral truth and predicts some actual realisation of that truth. An example from early history will illustrate these distinctions. Suppose we should, with some of the early Fathers, consider the narrative of God's dealings with Adam and Eve, His making coats of skin for them and clothing them, not to be true history, but a fiction composed with a moral design. Suppose we should say the meaning is that God, by His pardoning mercy, covered up and took away from our first parents their uneasy consciousness of sin, and their exposure in a sinful state to their own eyes and the eye of God, but that the literal transaction never took place, this would be a specimen of an allegory. The parables of Christ are allegories. They are conscious fictions, feigned with the design of conveying moral ideas more easily to the mind. Allegory, therefore, does not differ greatly from myth. The main difference is this, that allegory is always consciously so in the mind of the writer, while myth may be begotten by a national mind with apparent unconsciousness.

Suppose now that, instead of denying the literality of the transaction, we assumed it, but still affirmed that it had a moral meaning, which was that of God's covering mercy or imputing of righteousness, given above, then the event becomes a symbol. It is true that, in the history of interpretation, the name allegorical has been extended also to this kind of interpretation, and in this sense the Fathers are often called allegorical interpreters. They ought more strictly to be called symbolical interpreters. They rarely denied the literality or actual occurrence of any event, but they asserted that the occurrence had also a moral significance, which was generally the real cause of its being narrated in Scripture, and which it was the part of the interpreter to discover. It cannot be doubted that, as a whole, the Old

Testament dispensation was symbolical. Even its historical transactions, as the Exodus, the possession of Canaan, the conflicts with enemies outside, the separation of the people on all sides, and still more its ritual observances and institutions, its services in the tabernacle, its washings and clothings and the like, were all symbols of spiritual ideas. The very peculiarity of this dispensation was its thoroughgoing symbolism.

Suppose now we go a step further, and reach what has been called the type. Suppose that the transaction of clothing our first parents was real, that it was done with real skins (and, of course, these could only be procured by the death of certain animals); and that the moral significance of the symbol was that God put upon them that which covered their sin from their own consciousness and from God's sight, and that this covering could only be procured by the death of some creature other than themselves; and, further, that both this covering and this method of procuring it foreshadowed, or predicted in a figure, God's justifying righteousness procured by Christ's death,—then we have a theological type. It is a prophetical symbol. It is an institution or transaction that symbolises a truth and predicts a fact,—the fact, namely, in which the truth finds its perfect realisation. If, for example, sacrifice meant the self-dedication of the sinner to God, this truth of self-dedication, this great religious idea being embodied in the sacrificial action, the sacrifice was a symbol of it; but if in addition it was a type, it predicted, or, as the prediction was not in words but in the more obscure form of acts, it foreshadowed the perfect act of self-dedication to God,—Christ's offering up of Himself once for all. Or, if sacrifice meant the substitution in death of an innocent victim for the guilty, it was a symbol of this truth of religion; but, being also a type, it foreshadowed or foretold that only real substitution for sinners, namely, Christ.

Between the two views of sacrifice, just given, there is a

radical distinction. The first view, that of self-surrender or self-dedication, is an independent truth of religion, which no doubt finds its perfect realisation in Christianity, but is essential to every religion. The second idea, that of substitution, seems peculiar to Christianity, and the expression of it in sacrifice is not the symbolising of a general truth of religion as such, but of this particular religion; and, in fact, the typical value of the sacrifice is strictly its only meaning. It predicts the substitutionary death of Christ. No doubt we may divide this substitutionary death into two things,—the truth of substitution and the fact of His substitution,—and say that the truth was symbolised and the fact predicted. But, at any rate, such cases as this, where the truth symbolised is not a general truth, but has only a single illustration, namely, in the fact predicted, differ materially from cases in which the truth symbolised is general, and what is predicted is merely a high, or the highest, example of its realisation.

It is cases of this kind which seem to have given rise to two completely divergent views of typology to which I shall allude immediately. But, before doing this, I wish to draw attention to the fact that there is general agreement between the theological language and that of Scripture, and between their respective conceptions. Both admit two spheres, a prior and a present; both affirm a resemblance between the two; and both admit a relation, though perhaps the theological is more explicit in defining and naming the relation, which it calls at once *predictive*. The former is prophetical of the latter. It is round this predictive feature in the types that the difficulties gather.

If we take any Old Testament rite, say that of sacrifice, on all hands held typical, and ask what it was about it that made it predictive, or how it, as a whole, was prophetic of the sacrifice of Christ, the answer is not easy to give. Putting ourselves in the place of an Old Testament worshipper, and looking at the sacrifice with his eyes, we certainly see an

arrangement for taking away sin; we see that, on the death of a spotless creature closely connected with the worshipper, and presented by him, and offered on the altar of God, the worshipper's sins are held as removed. But, so far as the mere thing itself goes, there is no allusion to anything future. The relations are all those of the present: there is a real sinner, a real offence, a real offering, and a real pardon. What in all this is prophetic? The transactions have a present reality and validity. They are transactions in the inner and the outward life, and are relations with God of real men. Wherein does their predictiveness consist? Now, I think most definitions of a type have proceeded from the feeling that that question must be answered. Indeed, as a type is usually held to be a symbol with a prophetic force added, it is essential to account for the predictiveness, which is the very *differentia* between a type and a symbol. For example, here is one definition that has been given. "A type is a representation of spiritual truth by means of actions or objects placed before the senses, and calculated to convey through them to the mind a lively conception of the truth which they are designed to represent. A type is something which the divine author of Scripture announces to us as having been specially contrived and appointed for the one purpose of adumbrating certain religious truths, and foreshadowing certain future transactions with which these truths were connected. Viewed simply in itself, it is a hieroglyph, or symbolical representation of divine truth. Viewed in its relation to Christianity, it served the purpose of pre-intimation or memorial, to those who lived before the advent of Christ, of the great facts connected with Him on which Christianity as a religious system rests."

If, in view of this definition, we put the question, How did a type serve the purpose of a pre-intimation, to those then living, of the great facts of Christianity? we receive the following remarkable answer: "The essential element of

a type is *associative* or *suggestive* capacity, that is, the power of calling vividly before the mind something which is itself absent. Now, this may exist either with or without resemblance. The main point in all such cases is that the mind have acquired the *habit* of connecting the two together, so that, on the perception of the one, the conception of the other may invariably follow."

Here, then, is the explanation of the predictiveness of the type. It is due to an acquired habit of mind. The mind has learned to connect the future facts with this institution; and when the institution is visible, the thought of the future facts is suggested. The institution does not suggest them by any quality in itself, for the writer asserts that resemblance is not of essential consequence in a type. It suggests them simply from association with them. If one now asks, How came the knowledge of the facts which the mind has learned to associate with such ritualistic institutions? there is but one answer to such a question: "The future facts have been otherwise revealed to the mind, and it has been taught to associate them with the ritual institution which typifies them. For a type is something which the divine author of Scripture announces to us, though, of course, to the Old Testament saints primarily, as having been specially contrived and appointed for the one purpose of adumbrating certain religious truths, and foreshadowing certain future transactions." Both the truths and the transactions are future; and to adumbrate and foreshadow them is the one purpose of the institution,—and that it does adumbrate them is announced to us by the divine author of Scripture. One wonders what those terms 'adumbrating' and 'foreshadowing' really mean, if there be no connection of resemblance between the *umbra* or shadow, and the thing adumbrated? Why, even the hieroglyph arose from being primarily a picture.

This excessively mechanical theory is wholly opposed to evidence. For, first, the belief that resemblance is not an

essential element in the type, is opposed by the fact that all the types do resemble the future thing, called the antitype. Sacrifice certainly bears a close resemblance to Christ's offering of Himself. The lifting up of the brazen serpent bears so very great a likeness to the crucifixion of Christ, that He Himself speaks of His death as 'a lifting up.' And there is not one from which resemblance is awanting. And, second, the extraordinary opinion that the institutions called types were accompanied or preceded by verbal explanations of their antitypical facts, is destitute of every shred of support in the Old Testament Scriptures. There is no passage there containing such explanations; and there is no evidence that any esoteric teaching existed in the old dispensation alongside of the public instruction, but unwritten. And if explanations of this kind had been known, such corruption and misapprehension of the ritual system, as prevailed in later times, could hardly have occurred.

Not to dwell upon another argument, that such clear verbal explanations would have rendered this elaborate ritual unnecessary, the theory here maintained is opposed to what appears to be the manner of God's revelation. It is His way first to exhibit truth, rather than to give it plain and articulate utterance. He called Abraham before He taught the doctrine of election; He redeemed Israel before He gave any doctrine of redemption. Or, if His revelation assumes the form of speech, it is first of all the general principle, and not the particular fact, that is taught. It is the seed of the woman—the most general designation possible—in whom the promise first centres. Then it is the seed of Abraham,—a narrower sphere, but yet very wide. Then it is the seed of David,—still narrower, but yet of unlimited expansion. And if the so-called types predict, the predictive power must lie in themselves, not in any statement about future things, which they have the power of calling into the mind.

Another definition of a type not very dissimilar, though

making the predictiveness lie in another region, is that of Bishop Marsh, who says in his sixth Lecture: "To constitute one thing the type of another, as the term is generally understood in reference to Scripture, something more is wanted than mere resemblance. The former must not only resemble the latter, but must have been *designed* to resemble the latter. It must have been so designed in its original institution. It must have been designed as something preparatory to the latter. The type as well as the antitype must have been preordained, and they must have been preordained as constituent parts of the same general scheme of divine providence. It is this previous design and this preordained connection which constitute the relation of type and antitype. Where these two qualities fail, where the previous design and the preordained connection are wanting, the relation between any two things, however similar in themselves, is not the relation of type to antitype."[1] Again, in his seventh Lecture, Marsh proceeds: "When two apparently independent events, distant from each other many hundreds or even some thousands of years, are so connected in the general scheme of divine providence that the one was *designed* to indicate the other, the one is no less *prophetic* of the other than a *verbal* declaration that the thing which forms the antitype would in due season be accomplished."[2]

How shall this *design* be known? And the answer is: Only from Scripture. Those things only are to be held typical of things in the New Testament which are expressly said to be so. Marsh, no doubt, intended to frame a definition that would cut down the grotesque luxuriousness of the earlier typologies, in which anything in the Old, in the faintest manner resembling anything in Christianity, was forthwith considered a prophecy,—as that red thread which the harlot Rahab hung out, and was saved by, was considered a prophecy of the red stream of blood flowing from Christ's

[1] *Interpretation of the Bible*, p. 374. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 382.

wounds, whereby we really have salvation. But Marsh's definition, by making a type a designed representation, and by saying that the only way one can know a representation to be *designed* is not from anything in itself, but by being told in Scripture, has not only cut down the unsightly rankness of former typical growths, but cut up the tree from the root. Any investigation of principles on such a theory is out of the question.

But is not this fact of divine *design* a mere truism, which is, of course, to be assumed, but which it is absurd to elevate into the rank of a characteristic or a criterion, inasmuch as it is common to the whole Old Testament economy, which was designed by God to be a schoolmaster to lead to Christ? And the fact that some particular thing in the Old is supposed to be designed to indicate some particular thing in the New, cannot introduce any alteration; for, of course, if there be correspondence between the wholes, there must be between the parts. One can easily see that the question Marsh put to himself was, How am I authorised to consider this thing in the Old predictive of this in the New? and the simplest answer was, If God designed it to be.

But if we suppose the question put, How did an Old Testament saint know a thing to be typical? the answer is less easy. For we are supposed to be informed of God's designs from the New Testament; but the Old Testament saint would have been wholly without knowledge, unless he had been informed otherwise. I think Marsh's criterion of a divine design might be used as a negative test of a type. If it could be shown that anything was not designed as a premonition of the New, then this would teach us that our positive criteria had been misapplied, or had somehow failed to furnish us with the truth. But, obviously, the characteristic of a type must be sought for in itself. That which makes it prophetic must be some quality of its own,—not, perhaps,

peculiar to it, but common to it with the whole Old Testament dispensation. What the divine design secures is, that there be types, that there be combinations of history and institutions which are typical; but it is not God's *design* that makes them typical. It would be an argument of a similar kind to Marsh's, if one were to ask with regard to any passage, Did God design the passage to mean this? instead of first asking, What does the passage mean? and then inferring that God designed it to have this meaning.

The fact is too patent that such definitions imply that the typical institution has no meaning in itself; and thus questions about its meaning must be about what God intends to mean by it. The types are to the human mind like the terms of a foreign language. God understands them, for they are His language. But men must have them translated into their own tongue, before they can understand them. And this most mechanical idea, by placing the symbolism of Scripture out of all relation to human thought and the symbolisms of other religions, reveals also the other too patent fact that the typical is considered to lie in these external ritualistic symbols only, to lie exclusively in the *form* of the ritualism.

Consequently, we must hold that it is not essential to a type to be *designed by God*. This mark, though given by most typologists, is due to a confusion. Similarity, identity, and predictiveness are its real elements. If David could have been placed where he was, and been what he was, without God's design, he would still have been typical. But, of course, without God's intervention, neither he nor his dispensation could have come into existence. God brought about combinations which were typical, but it does not enter into the idea of a type that *He* brought it about. Most of the Old Testament characters and institutions and facts are the result not less of human free will than of divine appointment. It is not necessary to say that anything that is typical is absolutely and directly of divine

appointment, except in so far as God may be supposed to have co-operated with and ruled the free will of man, so as in the end by its means to secure His own intentions. But plainly we are not under any obligation to find express authority either in the Old Testament or the New for any particular thing or person being held to be typical. Rather, from the nature and circumstances of the thing or person, that is, from our knowledge of the New, we can say if any person or institution realised any of their relations, or any of the New Testament institutions. If they did, then they are typical.

What the divine design secures, therefore, is that there be such offices, persons, and relations as are typical; but the divine design is no part of their typicalness. A typical dispensation is one related to the dispensation of which it is typical, as a bud is to a flower, as a miniature to a portrait, as a sketch or outline to a filled-in picture. It is understood that the Old Testament dispensation in many of its relations—mainly in those relations called redemptive, though not so much in those relations called moral—stood related in this manner to the New. It is also understood that God willed this relation of the two,—that it was the result of His design. What then does the divine ordination and disposition of Old Testament institutions really contribute to the type? The redemptive significance of the one, and the same but higher redemptive significance of the other, connect the two dispensations together; and this redemptive sameness makes the identity or unity, which, existing in different degrees, makes the type. But the one would have been typical of the other, apart from all divine design, could the relation between them have arisen apart from divine design. But, of course, without special divine design, this relation could not have arisen. The divine design, therefore, is no element of the typicalness; it merely secures relations which are typical.

The question, Wherein lies the predictive element? is undoubtedly one of great difficulty to settle, as well as the question, How far did the people know the types to be types? Certainly they knew mainly their symbolical value, but perhaps not many of the Israelites knew fully their predictive worth. But knowing the great religious truths symbolised, say in sacrifice, in the tabernacle, and in their relations to the heathen, the Israelites were intelligent religious men, even if they did not know in whom alone the principle of sacrifice was perfectly true, and in whom alone God tabernacled among men.

The predictive element of the types seems to me to have lain in their imperfection. It is a general method with God to begin a great work far back, and move onward through many grades to its perfection. There seem really not many distinct elements in creation, and not many distinct forms. But these elements appear in endless combinations, and these forms in an inexhaustible variety of degrees of development,—all being steps onward to a perfect realising of the conception in the form. Now, a thoughtful Israelite could not but inquire whether his dispensation was final. Indeed, he was often told that it was not. And he could not help inquiring after the principle of sacrifice, and whether the shape in which he saw it embodied that principle perfectly, and so on. Much of the old dispensation seems thus laid down enigmatically, the natural effect of which is to stimulate and excite to inquiry and meditation. And so prophet after prophet gradually unfolded the principles of the Mosaic dispensation, correcting mistaken theories of it, and deepening conceptions that were in the main accurate, but not sufficiently profound.

Hence the chief principles of typology, which we have reached, are:

1. The old and the new dispensations contain essentially

the same religious principles, as they must do, being both the true religion, and occupied about the relations between the same God and the same men,—a holy God and sinful men.

2. Since God's method of revelation, as well as His method of acting in general, is progressive, and since the new dispensation contains what is perfect, it follows that the old contains the same elements in an imperfect state, as indeed the Epistle to the Hebrews expressly states that perfection was not by the law, and that the institutions of the Old Covenant could not make the comers thereunto perfect.[1]

3. From what we see of God's action, this imperfect will be something less than what is perfection, but of the same kind; and though this is God's general method of working, it seems almost necessary here for another reason, namely, the backwardness of those with whom He had to work. For, probably, the early men could not have taken in the naked, abstract principles of Christianity. And thus God's general method, which we might, at any rate, have expected, was still more to be expected from its being necessary on man's side. Now, the first form of the revelation being less, though identical, being the bud and not the flower,—though the bud of the flower,—and being of moral and religious things, its imperfection will consist partly in a want of clearness, as in the prophecy about the seed of the woman, partly in a want of unity and all-sidedness, being given bit by bit, but chiefly in being presented under the cover of a symbol,—that is, in a material form. This material form might be of many kinds, as for instance a great historical occurrence like the Flood or the Exodus; an institution like the Passover; a material thing like the tabernacle; or an outstanding, personal office like the kingship: things visible to the sight,

[1] Heb. 10^1.

but teaching permanently some great truth, such as judgment, redemption, atonement, indwelling of God among men, mediatorial sovereignty, and the like. This materialness is the distinguishing mark of the old dispensation. As I might express it, the old consists of a body and a soul, the new of a disembodied soul. In the old, almost no truth was taught abstractly, but every one concretely, in examples of history, in institutions, in men, etc. Thus the Old Testament, as a whole, is symbolical. The truth is in it, but under a material clothing. God's Church, for example, shines out in it distinctly as a nation; the world in opposition to the Church appears visibly in the heathen nations; their antithesis, in the constant war between the two; their separation, in the very distinct natural boundaries of Israel, and much more. In the Old Testament, every truth was embodied. In the New, the body falls away, and the truth alone is left.

4. These Old Testament truths, owing to their being materially expressed, were also imperfectly expressed. But this very imperfection was a prediction of their full realisation. Thus they were types.

CHAPTER XV.

The Isaianic Problem.

Before we can proceed to arrange in chronological order the writings of the canonical prophets, and summarise their doctrinal teaching, we must first discuss what we shall, for the sake of brevity, call the Isaianic problem. This problem involves a statement of the fundamental rules under which Higher Criticism is necessarily conducted. Higher Criticism is a technical term which has gradually come into use by way of contrast to Textual or Lower Criticism. The latter concerns itself with all questions regarding the text of Scripture, such as various readings, corrupt readings, and possible emendations. What promises to be a most potent instrument of textual criticism in connection with the prophetical books has been brought into use only within very recent years, namely, the rhythm or poetical structure of the prophecies.

Several theories are held regarding Hebrew poetry; but the most generally accepted one is that the poetical line is not to be measured by long or short syllables, nor by a certain number of syllables, but by accentual beats. That is to say, Hebrew poetry resembles our own in being accentual, though the number of accents is not by any means so rigidly fixed. Successive lines may differ, one having three beats and another four, but in general there is a tendency to uniformity. Therefore, in the prophetical books and the Psalms, this rhythmical principle may be extremely effective for the purposes of textual criticism.

If it finds a line too short, it will supply some word to lengthen it; if too long, it will omit some word, in order to bring the line to its proper length. As yet, however, the use of this method has not got much beyond the region of pure conjecture, and is to be used only with the most scrupulous caution.

Under the name 'Higher Criticism' are embraced questions of a different kind, such as those of date, authorship, unity of composition, and the like; and, of course, the principles, in accordance with which such questions can be properly decided. Its most powerful instrument is really the progressiveness of the religion of Israel. Consequently, the judgment in regard to the authorship of any passage must depend upon the time at which the ideas found in it became current. All criticism is really an application of the principles of common sense by a person provided with the requisite knowledge of facts. The expression 'Higher Criticism' is certainly somewhat infelicitous, as it has led many unsophisticated individuals to suppose that those who speak of it, and claim to practise it, arrogate to themselves some capacities which ordinary minds do not possess. When thus misunderstood or thus misrepresented, the expression may have something offensive in it; and it might therefore be well to avoid it. But, properly understood, it simply refers to the higher kind of questions on which the critical judgment is exercised, and does not suggest that the Higher Critics either are, or conceive themselves to be, superior persons. All that sound criticism implies, whether higher or lower, is a competent knowledge of the facts, good judgment, and perhaps a certain tact and instinctive sense, which only great familiarity with language and style can supply.

Biblical criticism, in the hands of those who use it reasonably, is entirely an inductive science. Its reasoning is of the kind called probable; and its conclusions attain

to nothing more than a greater or less probability, though the probability in many instances may be such as entirely to satisfy the mind. The criticism of the prophetic literature, the object of which is to ascertain the date of the writings, starts with no *a priori* principles as to the nature of prophecy, or the capabilities of the prophetic gift. If it apply certain principles to questions of date, these principles have been learned, in all cases, from an examination of the prophetic Scriptures; they are themselves the fruits of induction. It examines the prophecies, and observes the facts; and its conclusions are those which such an examination leads it to consider probable. It eschews the region of abstract principles. Some who practise it have, no doubt, spoken of certain things, such as the projection of the prophet's view into the minute circumstances of a period a century ahead of him, as "psychological impossibilities." These statements, however, are aberrations,—though aberrations which, from the love of the human mind for general principles that go further than mere conclusions founded on the registration of facts, it is difficult to avoid; and they are to be paralleled by similar excesses on the part of investigators in physical science. Such things, in both cases, are merely the individual faults of particular men, and are not to be laid to the charge of the science itself.

The science of historical criticism is comparatively new. For about twenty-five centuries, no one dreamt of doubting that Isaiah the son of Amoz was the author of every part of the book that goes under his name; and those who still maintain the unity of authorship are accustomed to point, with satisfaction, to the unanimity of the Christian Church on the matter, till a few German scholars arose, about a century ago, and called in question the unity of this book. The reference to the view of the ancient Church creates a prejudice against the critics which is hardly fair; for their doubts are recent, just because the whole science and

direction of mind which taught them to doubt is recent; and it would be as proper to blame the Fathers for not doubting earlier, as to blame the moderns for beginning to doubt so late. The whole science of historical criticism, whether applied to the Scriptures or to profane literature and ancient history, is of recent origin, being the outcome of that direction of mind which has created all the inductive sciences.

The portions of the Book of Isaiah which have been denied to be Isaiah's are these: *first*, the whole of the great prophecy of the Restoration, chaps. 40–66; and, *second*, many sections in the first 39 chapters, such as chaps. 13–14[23], 21[1–10], (chap. 23,) 24–27, 34–35, and 36–39. The parts admitted to be genuine are chaps. 1–12, 15–20, part of 21, 22, 28–33,—in all, about 26 or 27 chapters out of a total of 66.

The general canon on which these conclusions are based is this: That a prophetic writer always makes the basis of his prophecies the historical position in which he himself is placed. This principle is not an *a priori* principle, but is one gathered from careful observations, made on those prophecies the age of which is known. And this principle is supported by another, which is also a conclusion drawn from observation, namely, that the purpose of prophecy as exercised in Israel was mainly ethical, bearing on the life and manners of the people among whom the prophet lived.

These two principles support one another. The first is that, in point of fact, we find those prophets whose age is known constantly referring to the conditions of the time in which they lived, and to the contemporary kingdoms around Israel, and founding their prophetic speeches upon these things. The second is, that this is just what we should expect, because prophecy was in the main an ethical instrument, directed to the conduct and the religious life of the people, and not to any great extent occupied with the future, at least not with minute occurrences in the future,

but only with great general issues, such as the day of the Lord. Then the conclusion drawn from these two principles is, that when we find in any prophet allusions to conditions of society which we know from history to be those of a particular date, to political complications with the States around Israel, and to hopes or fears suggested by these complications, the prophet himself actually lived during these complications, was a contemporary of the kingdoms, which he names, such as Assyria or Babylon, and shared the hopes and fears of the people of that time.

Therefore, when we read prophecies, as in the second half of Isaiah, in which the people are comforted, and told that their warfare is fulfilled, and their sorrows are at an end; in which Jehovah, having cast off His people for a time, now returns to them in everlasting mercy, and pledges Himself to feed His flock for ever like a shepherd; in which Cyrus is introduced as executing God's counsel, and Jehovah promises regarding him, "He shall let go My captives, he shall rebuild My city; saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid";[1] in which it is also said, "The Lord will comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord";[2] in which the people themselves are introduced, supplicating the Lord after this manner: "Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech Thee, we are all Thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt Thou refrain Thyself for these things, O Lord? wilt Thou hold Thy peace, and afflict us very sore?"[3] and in which we find the exiles addressed thus: "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye

[1] Isa. 44^{26}. [2] Isa. 51^{3}. [3] Isa. 64^{9}.

from the Chaldeans; say ye, The Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob";[1]—when such words are read, and when the prophet is found basing his exhortations on such a condition of things and on such events, stilling the people's fears of Cyrus, striving to elevate their minds to such conceptions of Jehovah as he himself cherishes, that they may behold Him in all the great occurrences that are taking place, fulfilling His great purpose of their redemption and through them of the evangelisation of the world,—the conclusion to be drawn is that the author of the prophecies was a contemporary of the Exile and of Zion's desolation; that he witnessed the career of Cyrus; in short, that he prophesied towards the close of the Captivity, and saw the day of Israel's deliverance beginning to dawn.

This is the general argument, though it ramifies into a great number of particulars. There are some subsidiary arguments which are of less weight,—arguments from style, and the like. The general principle is stated by Bleek in his *Introduction* with moderation and fairness as follows: "The chief rule, therefore, which we shall use in this investigation [*i.e.* in ascertaining the date or age of a prophecy] is the result of our previous consideration of the nature of Hebrew prophesying, namely, the two points: (*a*) that the aim of the Hebrew prophets was throughout ethical, having in view the condition and necessities of their people; and (*b*) that during their inspiration they always retained a clear consciousness, and in their consciousness were never mentally isolated from the external circumstances surrounding them. From these two points we at once gain the rule that in the utterances presented to us we should take notice of those circumstances with which the actual prophecy is bound up, which are presupposed in it as present and well known; we can then look upon them as constituting the state of things surrounding the prophet at the time of uttering or

[1] Isa. 48^{20}.

composing his prophecies. If these circumstances clearly point out and are characteristic of any particular age, or any particular date, in preference to any other, we may thus ascertain the date of the composition."[1] And then Bleek refers to some of the features of the second half of Isaiah, such as those just mentioned, and draws the inference that the author of the prophecies was a contemporary of the Exile of Judah.

These two principles of Bleek's are virtually the same as the two stated above a little ago, though in the inverse order. It is of no consequence, however, in which order we take them,—whether we say, with Bleek, the purpose of prophecy is ethical, it was designed to influence the men of the prophet's own age; and in point of fact we find that the prophetic inspiration did not transport the prophet into distant times, he moved among the conditions of his own time, and made them the basis of his revelations in conformity with the ethical design of his function,—or whether we say, an examination of the prophecies shows that the prophets mainly confined themselves to exhortations and instructions founded on the condition of society in their day; and this is what we should expect, when we consider that the chief purpose of prophecy was an ethical and practically religious one.

It is important clearly to understand the principle here made use of, because it is capable of being invidiously put, and so as to raise an issue which is altogether false. The first half of the principle is that prophecy is ethical, that is, subserves moral purposes, and was exercised in the immediate religious interests of the persons among whom the prophet lived, and for their practical guidance in life and thought. It is not perhaps necessary, after what has been already said, to argue that this ethical and practical purpose is the chief characteristic of prophecy. But the practical deduction to

[1] Bleek's *Introduction*, Venables' translation, vol. ii. p. 37.

be drawn from it, in the present connection, is that for this moral object mere minute predictions reaching into distant periods, and a movement of the prophetic mind in these periods, would have been generally of no practical utility to the people. It would, in fact, have been, for all practical purposes, very much the same as if a preacher of to-day were to found his pulpit exhortations to us on a condition of things which he felt assured would supervene, let us say, a hundred years after this.

Another very important point, in this connection, is that the body of prophetic men was continuous. There was therefore no need that a prophet should prophesy for generations far distant. When these generations arose, a new prophet would be raised up to speak the message of God to them. Of course, the revelation to the people, by the prophets, of the general issues of the kingdom of God, and the destinies of the nation only to be realised many years later, such as the prophetic views of the peace and righteousness of the Messianic kingdom, might be very helpful to them, because these issues were often full of encouragement to them in their own struggles; or they were issues that depended on their present conduct, and might be furthered if good or retarded if evil, by their moral demeanour, and the announcement of them was meant to act upon their present life. Thus Jeremiah says: "The Lord sent me to prophesy against this city all the words which ye have heard. Now, therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent Him of the evil which He hath pronounced against you."[1]

Prophecy was to such an extent moral, and meant to influence the life of the people, that threatenings of evil may almost be said never to have been absolute. They were always revocable on certain conditions, at least to the

[1] Jer. 26^{12}.

extent of being postponed. Jonah predicted, in what seemed an absolute manner, the destruction of Nineveh within forty days; but on the repentance of the people the threatened evil was averted. And in the chapter of Jeremiah just cited, the prophecy of Micah regarding the destruction of the temple[1] is regarded by the elders of Israel in Jeremiah's day as having been in the mercy of God revoked. "Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to the assembly of the people, saying, Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high place of a forest. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the Lord, and entreat the favour of the Lord, and the Lord repented Him of the evil which He had pronounced against them."[2]

There were, no doubt, prophecies which were absolute. The promises of God were so; those that contained statements of the purposes of His grace essential to the salvation of men, as for example that the house of David should for ever bear rule in His kingdom, and many others which depended on His will alone. Yet even many prophecies of this kind contained an element of contingency in them, to this extent at least, that the conduct of men might retard, although it could never invalidate, their fulfilment. And it may be that what seems the postponement of the final glory of the Church, beyond the limits of the period at which it appeared to New Testament writers about to be realised, may be due to the backward conduct of the Church, to her slackness in evangelising the world, and to her want of faith and little readiness for the heavenly state.

But the operation of this moral element in prophecy must not be emphasised unduly, or made the foundation of a theory to the effect that no prophetic predictions

[1] Mic. 3. [2] Jer. 26[17ff.].

need be expected to be realised. This is a dispute which turns on the ambiguity of the term prophecy. Many of the prophecies were not predictions in the absolute sense. They were exhortations, or threatenings of evil, meant to influence conduct, and thus avert the very evils threatened. Some of them, on the other hand, might be absolute predictions. But many even of those that were dependent on men's conduct might be fulfilled, because men persevered in their evil ways, or returned to them. Jerome had already observed this, saying that many prophecies were given not *ut sed ne*, that is, were given not in order to be, but lest they should be, fulfilled. No doubt it is generally the case that the prophesied evil did eventually ensue. Nineveh was ultimately destroyed, though the destruction was retarded. The house of God was at last overthrown, although its overthrow was mercifully postponed.

Hence it becomes a very delicate operation to strike the balance, in such cases, between the moral element which introduced contingency into the prophecy, and the absolute element which lay in it as a prediction. But Jeremiah formulates the moral principle of prophecy when he says: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, to pluck up, and to break down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against which I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I sought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in My sight, and obey not My voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them. Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way."[1] Now this moral character of prophecy makes it to be an essential characteristic of prophecy, that the actual conditions of the prophet's time,

[1] Jer. 18^{7-11}.

and the state of things and parties among which he lived, are the things which he makes the basis of his prophetic discourses. Therefore, from the historical allusions to parties within Israel and to events outside, such as the downfall of Babylon before Cyrus, we may infer the age of the prophecy in which they occur.

The second principle laid down by Bleek is a more delicate one to handle. It is to the effect that, during their inspiration, the prophets always retained a clear consciousness, and in their consciousness were never mentally alienated from the external circumstances surrounding them; the inference being, that the circumstances appearing in any prophecy are those of the actual life of the prophet, and not those of a distant period of time, into which he was transported in prophetic ecstasy.

In justice to Bleek, it is necessary to observe that he founds the principle on observation, and not on any theoretical judgment regarding the capabilities of the prophetic gift. He does not say that the prophets might not, in their state of inspiration, have been transported for a lengthened time into a distant period, and placed amidst circumstances unlike those of their own time. He limits himself to saying that, in fact, as appears from observation, it was not of the nature of the prophetic inspiration that this should happen. It is necessary to remember that this is the real position which he takes, because the position is often misunderstood. He and those who agree with him are often represented as limiting the capabilities of prophetic inspiration; in other words, as denying the possibility of God making known to men details of the distant future, or the possibility of these details being known by men, that is, as denying the possibility of any supernatural knowledge.

Now, there seems to be certain proof in some of the prophets that they did predict isolated and contingent events at a distance from their own time. Thus Jeremiah says to

Hananiah, a false prophet who prophesied that the Captivity, which Jeremiah had declared would last seventy years, would cease in two: "Hear now, Hananiah; the Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will send thee away from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast spoken rebellion against the Lord. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month."[1] Therefore it seems to me that this second principle of Bleek's, if it be not based rigidly on induction of facts, but go the length of stating the limitations of prophetic inspiration, is from its nature somewhat precarious. It might be doubtful whether an induction from observation, seeing there is no principle, could be so wide as to be entirely trustworthy. At any rate, it is but fair to this author and to those who agree with him, to take notice that he does not base his principles on *a priori* grounds, or on any impossibility of such illumination of the prophet's mind as to give him detailed knowledge of distant events, and enable him to move among them as if they were present. He bases his principle on what he observes the prophetic ecstasy to be in fact. I suspect, however, that if a principle were sought for this peculiarity of what the prophetic ecstasy is in fact, it would have to be found in the author's first principle of the ethical character of prophecy. The prophetic ecstasy has the character and limitations which it has, because a capacity enabling the prophet to foresee distant details, by a transportation into the midst of the conditions and life of the Church or the world, centuries or even decades of years after the prophet's day, would have been morally useless to the people, and was, in fact, quite unnecessary for the exercise of the functions of prophecy, such as they were. Dr. Fairbairn, when cautioning students of prophecy against regarding it too exclusively as prediction, says: "When considered merely as

[1] Jer. 28^{15}.

a divine act of foresight, prophecy is but an evidence of God's foreknowledge, which, even in its highest exercise, is still only a *natural* attribute, standing in no necessary connection with spiritual aims and purposes. But what, if not to exhibit these, is the great design of all the revelations of Scripture? They are given to tell not that God is, but what He is,—what in the elements of His character, the principles of His government, in His purposes of mercy or judgment toward men. So that to contemplate the revelations of prophecy in their relation merely to the divine foresight, is to view them apart from what has ever been the higher aim of God's direct communications to men. And not only so, but the further error is naturally fallen into, of expecting prophecy to be more full and explicit in its announcements regarding future events than, from its inherent nature and immediate uses, it could properly be." [1]

Thus the great argument for settling the age of a prophecy is based upon the moral character and purpose of prophecy. The prophet's aim was to influence men. Therefore he based his words on their condition, on the elements of their life before him, on the situation, whether moral or political, of his time, on the dangers that threatened, and on the people's attitude towards prominent forces then existing, attaching his announcement of principles to these, and opening up his general glimpses into the future, in order to indicate the final issue of these. Consequently, the circumstances that shine through a prophecy are to be considered those of the prophet's own day.

This is the whole argument that may be called the argument beforehand, although it is an argument founded on two facts, both obtained from observation, namely, *first*, we find prophecy to be of this moral character, as we should expect it to be; and, *second*, we find that particular prophets always do move among the circumstances of their own time.

[1] *Fairbairn on Prophecy*, p. 57.

There are also various other arguments, subsidiary to this main one. Of these, one to which I may refer runs thus: Admitting that the prophets might give detailed predictions of occurrences, and admitting that they might enjoy a prolonged transportation into the midst of circumstances that occurred long after their own time, and, indeed, without limiting in any way the manner of the prophetic ecstasy, the general impression produced upon our minds by a particular passage might be that it is not prophetic, but historical; and we might come to the conclusion that the prophet is not looking forward to the condition of things to which he alludes, but is standing face to face with it. For example, in Isa. 64 there is a prayer: "Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down"; and the petitioners go on as follows: "Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt Thou refrain Thyself for these things, O Lord? wilt Thou hold Thy peace, and afflict us very sore?"[1] It is argued that the way in which the burning of the temple is introduced, and made the foundation of a prayer, produces the impression that it had taken place. The argument is not that the destruction of the temple is referred to. That would have been no argument. Micah predicted it more than a hundred years before it happened. The argument is that the manner of the reference, and the whole aspect of the passage, suggest that the allusions in it are historical, and not prophetical. This kind of argument from the impression produced by the book itself may be applied very extensively.

Bleek's manner of putting his main argument in terms of the prophetic inspiration, though it lends force to it, has something in it perhaps not quite happy. We know nothing of the prophetic inspiration, or of its manner of operation,

[1] Isa. $64^{9ff.}$

except what we learn from the results of it, that is, from the written prophecies. It is, therefore, safer to put the argument in terms of the facts revealed by these prophecies, and to say nothing of the prophetic ecstasy or inspiration. Anything like ecstasy was very rare, and it is safest to abstain from judgments concerning the prophetic state. It is sufficient to say that, in point of fact, the prophecies are usually based upon the actual circumstances of the prophet, so usually that when we find any prophet basing his discourses on any circumstances and events, the strong probability is that these were the events amidst which he actually lived and actually exercised his office.

Two objections might possibly be made to the above reasoning. First, it may be said that to found an argument on Amos and Hosea, on Jeremiah and Ezekiel and some parts of Isaiah, excluding other parts of Isaiah from our induction, is improper, and is a kind of begging the question. The prophecies Isa. 40–66 are given under the name of Isaiah as much as chap. 7, and the induction ought to cover the whole field. To this it may be answered: *First*, that no doubt the fact, that these chapters are found attached to the prophecies of Isaiah, has its weight. But these prophecies, though evidently one composition, have no prophet's name and no date assigned to them immediately. It is not likely that Isaiah made a complete collection of his prophecies. In all probability, therefore, the present place of these prophecies is due to some collector. At least, this is possible; and the possibility is enough. We know that editors of the Scriptures have occasionally assigned compositions to authors erroneously. For example, some Psalms are ascribed to David, which can hardly be his; and some proverbs are put under the heading "Proverbs of Solomon" which are later than Solomon's day; and the prophecies of Jeremiah exist in two editions, in which the chapters are very differently arranged. The fact that tradi-

tion has assigned these prophecies to Isaiah is therefore not an absolute barrier in the way of opening the question. And, *secondly*, we must begin our investigations into the nature of prophecy on ground which is perfectly firm. We must start with prophecies of which the age is really known, such as Amos, Hosea, and Jeremiah. The conclusions drawn from these prophecies are sure, so far as these prophecies are concerned; and these afford a very strong probability (of course, it is nothing more), with which we can go on to disputed prophecies.

A second objection might be this. It is certain that all the prophets know of the Exile and even the Return, Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah alike. Therefore the argument that the prophetic inspiration did not extend to the future, cannot be sustained. This is certainly the case; and this is why Bleek's way of putting the argument is not quite happy. All the prophets do see into the future; all those anterior to the Exile predict both the Exile and the Return. Here the way in which the prophets respectively speak of the Exile would have to be examined, and their differences noted. Amos says in Jehovah's name: "I will carry you beyond Damascus"; Hosea: "I will allure her into the wilderness"; Isaiah: "There will be a great forsaking in the midst of the land." All the references of these prophets have two characteristics: *first*, the prophets themselves stand before the Exile; that event is certain, but it is yet to come; and, *secondly*, they refer to it briefly as a fact in the future, but with no details.

In the second half of Isaiah, on the contrary, the prophet has the Exile behind him; it has endured for a long time, and indeed is drawing to an end. The people are apostrophised and exhorted to flee from Babylon and the Chaldeans, and yet the Chaldean empire did not arise till a hundred years after Isaiah. *Secondly*, the prophet's references to its conditions are vivid and detailed. Indeed, the author spends his life among the exiles, knows their

thoughts, their despondencies, their blindness and deafness, their querulousness, their particular sins, and much more. The minuteness of his references is hardly surpassed by that of Amos and Hosea in regard to the condition of the people in the time when they lived. The *impression* produced on the mind, when reading Isa. 40–66, is that the prophet speaks from personal observation and intercourse with the exiles.

This applies not only to the prophet's references to the circumstances and mind of the exiles, but to his whole circle of ideas. For example, his attitude towards idolatry is quite different from that of earlier prophets. They combat idolatry in Israel, to which these chapters hardly allude. It is idolatry in itself, that he subjects to sarcastic treatment. It is Jehovah the true God and Israel His servant, on the one side, that he opposes to unreal gods and the nations who worship them, on the other. The author is almost a dogmatic theologian. Again, the Christology in these chapters is completely unlike that in previous prophets. In them, the Messianic or Davidic king is the most imposing figure of the future and the time of the end. Here, it is the Servant of Jehovah, the representative and embodiment of the idea of the people Israel, as having in it the light of God's word, and as subject to sorrow and suffering, and the whole idealisation of Israel as Jehovah's "servant" in evangelising the world, as the light of the Gentiles. Such an idea could hardly have arisen, while the monarchy still lasted, nor previous to the time of the extreme calamities and miseries of the Exile.

Now, there cannot be a doubt that Bleek's canon, thus interpreted, is absolutely sound. It can be proved by the widest induction of facts. In general, prophets link on their prophecies to events, or tendencies, or forms of life and belief, of their own times. Otherwise, their prophecies would be both without purpose, and unintelligible. The connection of

history and prophecy is organic. Word and fact are the counterparts of each other. The calamity or crisis or victory or redemption in history is made the subject of speech, and its meaning expounded in prophecy, and lessons are drawn from it, and warnings or promises attached to it. For neither the occurrence nor the prophecy was accidental. God meant them both to be at the time they came; and He meant the first to furnish occasion for the second, and the second to be the exposition of the first. Prophecies which did not arise out of the life of the nation would not have been intelligible; or, if intelligible, being without any connection with their history and experience, would have been quite destitute of interest to them. In general, therefore, the canon is one of the soundest and most essential to be held as a principle of the method of revelation as a whole. But it may be made a question whether it be of so rigid application that all exceptions to it are to be quite excluded.

The canon, first of all, is of a positive kind. It affirms that the presence of certain marks in a prophecy determines its age unmistakably. Allusions to the Exile, to Babylon, to Persia, and such like, prove that the prophecy was delivered by a speaker actually face to face with all these things. Hence, in such a passage as Isa. 21^2: "A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease": the 'sighing' is that of the Jewish captive; the treacherous dealer is the Chaldean monarchy; and Persia is on its way to destroy it. Such a passage as this must belong to the time of the near end of the Exile. Again, take such a passage as Isa. 13–14. There we read: "Take up this proverb against the king of Babylon: How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! . . . How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning; how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken

the nations!" Consequently this prophecy must also belong to a time near to the fall of Babylon. We shall cite but one other example in order to exhibit the working of the rule. The chapters Isa. 40–66 are all pitched in the tone of the Exile. Jerusalem has long been in ruins, the temple is destroyed, the cities of Judah laid waste, and the mission of the prophet is to comfort the people with the promise of a restoration that shall be for ever, and a glory that shall never fade. Thus we read: "I am the Lord that confirmeth the word of His servant; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: that saith of Cyrus, He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."[1] Such words, it is argued, could not have been written unless the temple had been destroyed, and unless the years of the Exile had been wearing towards a close. The great prophecy, chaps. 40–66, everywhere presupposes such a condition of things, and its author must have been living at this era.

Thus, by means of this rule, where it is applicable, the age of a prophecy may be ascertained. Of course, since the rule requires the positive presence of certain marks, it may in many cases be inapplicable. Bleek says again: "*First*, the circumstances then existing are not usually expressly stated in connection with the prophecy itself, but at the most are only hinted at, and as a rule merely inferred; they are therefore often not easily to be discerned. *Secondly*, in the very deficient sources which are at our disposal as to the history of the people of Israel, there are only a small number of its epochs of which we have any knowledge sufficiently detailed. . . . Still we must keep close to the above rule."[2]

[1] Isa. 44^{26}.

[2] Bleek's *Introduction*, Venables' translation, vol. ii. p. 38.

Moreover, while it appears that the canon is thus very partially applicable, it is but fair to remember that it is held by critics with varying degrees of strictness, and under admissions that, to some extent, modify its conclusions even in the circumstances where it may be applied. The canon is strictly a deduction drawn from the consideration of prophecies, the dates and circumstances of which are known. It is found that there are, in most of them, allusions to these circumstances. At any rate, where allusions do exist, they are always to the contemporary history and manners. Prophecy rises out of the history and the life. Of course, this deduction is strengthened by another deduction as to the main purpose of prophecy. It is moral, it is meant to teach, to inculcate the principles of the law. This is its first aim, and it only deserts the present for such flights into the future as may be effective in impressing the present.

Now, a critic may hold this position about prophecy as a whole, without, however, making it his main position. He may take up his position in the rear of it, or in front of it. Bleek argues that, in point of fact, we find that the allusions in prophecy are truly to its historical circumstances, and that it is ethical, directed to the morals and condition of its time. He does not enter into the question whether prophecy could be other than it is. It is sufficient for him that he so finds it. But a critic who is somewhat more thoroughgoing, while accepting Bleek's position, might affirm that one may be held still further back, namely, "Prophecy is of this kind, and it could be of no other kind." That Isaiah could transport himself into the conditions of the Exile, across two broad centuries of historical change, has been characterised as 'a psychological impossibility.' Prophecy does not exhibit such transpositions, nor was it possible that it could.

On the other hand, a critic disposed to estimate the

supernatural in revelation higher than Bleek, may, while not denying his general canon and its general applicability, take up a position in front of him, and feel doubtful as to whether it is reasonable or justifiable on this principle alone to settle any great question of criticism or interpretation. He may maintain that, it being admitted that there are, in the prophets, predictions of contingent events, and that they were able to foresee and foretell such events, not merely by combination or wise conjecture, but by supernatural inspiration, there is nothing in the nature of the case that makes it impossible for a prophet to be transported into a distant epoch of the world's history, and to move there for a time in thought and life continuously, having the Church in idea before him and in the conditions of that epoch, and to base his words entirely upon his ideal circumstances, making no allusions whatsoever to his actual historic place. The question now becomes one of probability.

Thus both parties are thrown back upon other means of defence and attack. The assailants of the integrity of the book, having in their indisputable canon a very strong weapon, content themselves, in addition, with showing that the disputed passages exhibit all the marks of a different authorship from the genuine. The vocabulary is different; the complexion of style, and the ideas, among which the author most willingly moves, are different. The defenders of the integrity, on the other hand, having at first nothing to oppose to the strong argument of their opponents except the statement *that there is no impossibility*, are under the necessity of bringing up as many additional forces as they can muster. Accordingly, besides maintaining that there is no impossibility in Isaiah transporting himself into the condition of the Exile, they proceed to adduce some particular facts which seem to them to show that there was no unlikelihood that he should do so. We may look for a moment at some of the best of these.

First, Isaiah was quite familiar with the idea of the Exile. Indeed, that idea was familiar to all prophetic men. There is hardly a prophet or writer who does not see that the inevitable issue of Israel's sad deflection from rectitude, and her inveterate idolatry and social dissoluteness, must be her dispersion and political dissolution. Isaiah, in perhaps his earliest vision, has this view presented to him: "Make the heart of this people fat. . . . Then said I, Lord, how long? And He answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate. And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land."[1] Nay more, Isaiah actually names the Exile by anticipation: "My people are gone into captivity."[2]

Second, Isaiah was quite familiar with redemption from exile,—an idea indeed common, like the idea of the Exile itself, to all the prophets, even the earliest. For instance, he says, "It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set His hand again the second time (Egypt being the first) to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria and from Egypt, etc. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."[3] And his predecessor Amos was familiar with both ideas of dispersion and restoration.

Third, the above exile and restoration, no doubt, is predicted in connection with Assyria, though the prediction is valid for all connections. But Isaiah is also familiar with an exile into Babylon, for he says to Hezekiah: "Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And thy sons shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."[4] There is no reason to doubt the

[1] Isa. $6^{10f.}$. [2] Isa. 5^{13}. [3] Isa. $11^{11f.}$. [4] Isa. $39^{6f.}$.

historical character of this prediction, whether the chapter was written by Isaiah or no. It is generally considered that these historical chapters, 36–39, are the connecting link betweeen Isaiah's later and earlier prophecies, and that these verses furnish ground for the new position assumed in the later prophecies.

And it may be added that this presentiment of exile and deliverance in Babylon is not peculiar to Isaiah, but common to him and his contemporary Micah, who thus addresses the Church: "Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; and there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies."[1] Here Micah agrees with Isaiah's position in his earlier chapters. In the later chapters, what is here a flight, or a glance, into the relations of the Exile, is a continuous abode and movement. Having thus removed to some degree, as it supposes, the improbability of Isaiah's authorship of the Exile prophecies, the defensive criticism advances to its positive task. It undertakes to show that these chapters were written by Isaiah.

Its method here has a main argument as well as a subsidiary. The subsidiary argument is this, that in these concluding chapters there are allusions to things that existed only before the Exile; passages, therefore, in which the author has broken through his ideal state, and opened his eyes on the real historic things about him. For example, 56^{9}–57^{11} is a passage where the enemies of the people of Judah are summoned to approach, and swallow them up; and the worship of Moloch is spoken of as practised in the deep valleys. Both Bleek and Ewald agree in considering such passages not to be by the prophet of the Exile. They explain them, however, as pieces which

[1] Mic. 4^{10}.

that author has inserted in his own work, as Isaiah inserts chap. 2[1-5]. The defensive criticism, as I have said, considers them passages where the real historic position of Isaiah shines through the ideal one of the Exile.

The main argument of the defenders of the integrity is that the earlier and the later prophecies form a unity. Now, a unity may be of various kinds. In critical questions, these kinds of unity are mainly sought to be shown: first, what one might call a linguistic unity, identity of style, sameness of phraseology and vocabulary; second, what might be styled a psychological unity, sameness of subject, or sameness of treatment, where the subject is the same; a connection, between earlier prophecies and later, of that kind which is known to exist between two stages of the same mind, widely separated as in early manhood and advanced old age,—in other words, development both in subject and in the manner of treating it, and development of the kind one would expect. Seeds of thoughts may be flung out lavishly in the earlier prophecies, and be developed, with the more parsimonious care of old age, in the later. Lines and threads may be dropped once, but be taken up again, and carried further. For example, eschatological glimpses of things beautiful and far off may broaden out in the later work into an unchanging blaze of light: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee." Third, a unity of relation to other literature, that is, similarity in the method of quotation in both parts, either from other literature or in other literature. This positive argument has been carried out most fully by Caspari and Delitzsch.

Now, it will at once occur to a reader that these are very delicate arguments, and that great skill will be required to collect the materials, and a very sound judgment needed to dispose of them rightly. For example, supposing it could be shown that there is great linguistic affinity between both

parts of the Book of Isaiah, what inference would such a fact justify? Would it justify the inference that the two parts were by one author? or would it merely account for some collector of scattered prophecies thinking them the work of one author and thus putting them together? That some affinity exists may be admitted. But while this may be sufficient to account for the two parts being classed together, it may be no easy matter to say whether it is such an affinity as implies unity of authorship or only imitation, whether conscious or no.

Again, with regard to the psychological unity, the same may be said. It is a delicate argument in any case, and is more precarious in Scripture than elsewhere. There is said to be a preparation, in many ways, in the first half for the second. But all earlier Scripture is a preparation for later. There is that unity and advancement in Scripture, as a whole, which may give it an apparent psychological oneness, even with a diversity of authorship. But, again, if there were this unity, while it might be precarious at once to conclude oneness of authorship, it might explain, at any rate, how the parts have been attributed to one author.

I cannot help remarking that there is very great apparent diversity between the Christology, for example, of the two divisions. The Christology of the early chapters of Isaiah is of the usual kind, and the Messiah is a king; but in the later, the Messiah is the whole covenant people, the 'idea,' so to speak, of Israel, showing what purposes God had in choosing it, what endowments He bestowed on it, and what issues He will yet accomplish by it. These purposes and endowments and issues, gathered together into an ideal person, constitute the 'Servant of the Lord.' He is the 'idea' of Israel. No doubt, as God's purposes cannot come to nought, this 'idea' shall somehow become real. Thus, all of the nation being stripped off, both in qualities and number,

that does not realise the idea, there shall stand out at last an Israel, servant of the Lord, single in personality and perfect in trueness to God's idea. But it is very obvious that this is a phenomenon in the Christology of Scripture perfectly unique, and furnishing at least a great apparent discrepancy between the circle of ideas in the earlier and the later parts of Isaiah. Whether there may not after all be a profounder unity, need not be discussed. But the question before us is whether two such different conceptions of the Christology are probable in the same author, and particularly whether the latter conception of the suffering Israel, reduced down to its very essence, and everything adventitious stripped off it, could have arisen in a prophet's mind except through the painful discipline of many years of wasting oppression. To my mind, this Christology of the second half of the book furnishes the strongest argument against its authorship by Isaiah. It is not only unlike Isaiah's known Christology, but it is unlike what we should expect the Christology of his era to be. It is a Christology that seems like a protest against the fear beginning to seize the people's mind, that they were going to become extinct as a nation, and that all the hopes centred in them as a people were completely to fail.

Of course, conservative criticism is possessed of an argument which Higher Criticism can do almost nothing to get over, namely, the argument from tradition. This argument is twofold, and owes all its effectiveness to its absolute simplicity. It first states the fact that all the prophecies have been generally ascribed to Isaiah, and then asks, with an air of triumph: If these prophecies are not all by Isaiah, how explain the loss of the real author's name? As a Princeton professor eloquently puts it: "The oblivion of the author's name and history is more inexplicable, not to say incredible, than anything about the other doctrine can be to a believer in inspiration. This is a difficulty which no

ingenuity has ever yet been able to surmount. That a writer, confessedly of the highest genius, living at one of the most critical junctures in the history of Israel, when the word of God began to be precious and prophetic inspiration rare, should have produced such a series of prophecies as this, with such effects upon the exiles, and even upon Cyrus, as tradition describes, and then have left them to the admiration of all future ages without so much as a trace of his own personality about them, is a phenomenon of literary history compared with which the mystery of Junius is as nothing. . . . Even this, however, though sufficiently incredible, is not all we are required to believe; for we must also grant that these anonymous though admirable writings were attached to those of a prophet who flourished in the preceding century, and with whose productions they are said to have scarcely anything in common; and that this mysterious combination took place so early as to be beyond the oldest tradition of the Hebrew canon, and was so blindly acquiesced in from the first, that not the faintest intimation of another author or another origin was ever heard of for two thousand years," etc.

To answer this, however, one has only to refer to the Book of Job, a work probably belonging to the same age, equally remarkable for brilliancy and power, though of a different kind, and of the author of which history has preserved no trace. In Hebrew literature there is a very strange and impressive impersonality. The authors did not speak from themselves but from God; and, having delivered their message, they retire from view, forgetting themselves, and being speedily forgotten in name by others.

As I am not so much interested at present in arguing the question as in indicating its general bearings, I may refer to one or two other objections. It is said, for example, that these chapters are repeatedly quoted in the New Testament under the name of Isaiah, as by St. Paul in Rom. $10^{16.\ 20}$:

"For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"[1] and again: "Isaiah is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not."[2] How shall we regard such statements? Now, I suppose every one will admit that the Apostle Paul is not in these passages arguing the authorship of Isaiah. The question whether Isaiah was the writer of these passages, was not before his mind. Such a question had not been raised in his day. Not being, therefore, before him, can we say that he has given any decision upon it? Paul does not speak to that question. He uses phraseology current in his day, and cites a passage under the name by which it went in his time, and still goes in our time. Are we entitled to plead his authority on one side or other of this question, of which probably he never heard? His language may be evidence of how men thought and spoke in his time, evidence that these chapters went under the name of Isaiah, and formed part of the Book of Isaiah; but is it evidence of any other kind?

Principal Cunningham, in discussing the question, how far *obiter dicta* and allusions in the Fathers are to be pressed as evidence of their deliberate opinions, says: "The first thing which in fairness ought to be attended to is the question whether or not the author ever had the precise point controverted present to his mind." And he proceeds to argue that, unless he was speaking formally on the question, his words cannot be held as evidence of his opinion in regard to it. They can only be evidence of the kind of general opinion and mode of speech prevailing in his day. This law of evidence he characterises as "an obvious dictate of common sense, confirmed by manifold experience."[3] Now, must we not apply the same principles of evidence to the Scriptures? The apostle's whole interest lies in the quotation. Does not a fair use of evidence lead to the conclusion that on the question whether Isaiah was really the author of the quotation

[1] Isa. 53[1]. [2] Isa. 65[1]. [3] *Historical Theology*, i. 198.

—such a point never having been before his mind—he has really said nothing to his readers or to us?

Again, some writers argue that if the author of these prophecies was not Isaiah, then the actual author 'palmed them off' on that prophet, and gave his own productions currency under the fame of his great name. Such an argument ought not to be used unless there be no escape from it. It is a moral argument; and a fair argument, if we are compelled to use it. But in this case we are under no such compulsion. Many other explanations of the fact that these prophecies are united to Isaiah's are conceivable and possible. There is not in all these chapters the faintest allusion to Isaiah, or any attempt to speak in his name, or connect anything said with him. And then, as to the fact of the prophecies being now connected with writings of Isaiah, there is not the slightest evidence that it was their author who so connected them. The connection may be due to those who collected the precious fragments of prophecy together,—persons living probably long after the Exile. Nor can it be at all held certain that these collectors attached the prophecies to Isaiah's writings because they believed them written by him. The prophecies in all the great prophetic books are found arranged not chronologically, but in groups according to subjects treated, so that prophecies, far separated in time of delivery, stand side by side. For example, Isa. 28 stands united with 29–33, though they belong to periods of time at least twenty years apart. Whether this arrangement be due to the authors, or to those who arranged the canon, is unimportant. Now, the historical section in Isaiah, chaps. 36–39, ends with a prophecy that Judah shall be carried captive into Babylon. It was quite natural, therefore, to connect with this prophecy others occupied with the restoration from Babylon. Of course, if Isaiah were their author, this would be the proper place for these prophecies. That is true; but what I am desirous of saying is that, supposing another prophet to be

their author, there is no ground for charging him with a fraud, nor even any certain ground for charging collectors with an error of judgment.

There is a point in regard to the order of the books in the canon, which is unquestionably of some importance here. The order in the oldest Jewish MSS. is Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah. This must surely imply a consciousness on the part of the collectors that elements of Isaiah belong to a date later than Ezekiel.

There is only one other thing I should like to emphasise. The question is one of fact and criticism exclusively, and not a matter either of faith or practice. Such questions ought to be kept as far away as possible from all interference with the articles of religion. How can it affect one's religious condition whether one believes Isaiah to be the single author of the prophecies attributed to him, or to have had others joined with him? And I wish to say that I think we ought to repudiate and resent the attempts that are made to make this question one of religious belief; and to endeavour so to place the question that it do not become so.

Now, perhaps the following procedure in such cases might be recommended:

1. It is well always to look at the proposition which is the subject in dispute, and to satisfy ourselves as to its character in itself, that is to say, whether, apart from any consequences which may follow from its connection with other circumstances, it be or be not in itself a harmless proposition. The proposition in this case is: that not Isaiah the son of Amoz, but another prophet, is the author of these prophecies. Now, it can be of no consequence to us in itself who was their author. Isaiah was not the only inspired prophet of God, though he may have been the greatest of them. The writings that come from the hand of other prophets are to us no less the word of God than his. What gives Scripture its value and authority to us is not that Moses or

Isaiah or David wrote it, but that the writers of it, whoever they were, were commissioned by God to give it to His Church, and that in it they expressed to the Church His will. The proposition, therefore, in itself, apart from any complications which it may occasion, is a harmless proposition.

2. Again, as a just rule for our conduct in dealing with such questions, seeing that in dealing with them we shall have to take a certain attitude also towards our fellow-Christians who have adopted the opinions in dispute, I would say that we ought not to be hasty in complicating a proposition harmless in itself, or in bringing it into connections, or attaching to it consequences, that raise questions of principle. I mean, that we ought to look carefully about the question, with the view of seeing whether it may not really be free of any necessary evil consequences, and not be hasty, but rather slow to mix it up with other matters which give it a questionable or dangerous appearance. We should always be more ready, if an opinion be harmless in itself, to keep it clear of connections which give it a doubtful look, than to bring it into relations of this kind. This is due from us both in the interests of truth, and in the interests of a just freedom of opinion. Many an opinion is proscribed, not because it is in itself of consequence, but because at first sight it may seem, if admitted, to draw doubtful consequences with it. But these consequences are often associated with it hastily and without reflection, and because we have been accustomed to think in a certain manner, and to connect certain things together. And before attaching these consequences to an opinion in itself harmless, we ought always to consider carefully whether they follow necessarily, or whether a view may not be taken, which keeps the original opinion clear of them.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Canonical Prophets classified and their Teaching summarised.

The canonical prophets are those whose prophecies have come down to us in the various prophetical books of the Old Testament. From what we have already said about prophecy, it is evident that the most general classification of prophets would be into three classes: (1) those who prophesied by act, as Abraham by immigrating into Canaan; (2) those who prophesied by word, like Elijah and Elisha; and (3) those who not only prophesied by word, but also committed their prophecies to writing. It is with the last class only that we have now to deal. At first the writing prophets were politicians and statesmen as well as their predecessors, the speaking prophets. But they did not head revolutions as Elisha did. They withdrew from external, national, and party conflicts. But, so long as the kingdom of Israel remained a State, the prophets of Jehovah could not cease to be statesmen; for it was their duty, according to the exigencies of the time, to warn, counsel, and, if need be, oppose the rulers of their nation. The only weapon, however, which the prophets now use is the word of God which is in their mouth; and long before this order of prophetic men ceased, they had reached the conviction that the destruction of the nation was inevitable,—a conviction that they had courage enough to proclaim openly both to rulers and ruled.

The best way, therefore, of grouping the canonical

prophets is according to the world-power with which Israel had to do at the time.

I. Prophets of the Assyrian Age.
Amos, *c.* 760–750.
Hosea, *c.* 750–737.
Isaiah, 740–700.
Micah, *c.* 724 and later.
Zephaniah, *c.* 627.
Nahum, *c.* 610–608.

II. Prophets of the Chaldean Period.
Jeremiah, *c.* 626–586.
Habakkuk, *c.* 605–600.
Ezekiel, *c.* 593–573.

III. Prophets of the Persian Period.
Isaiah, chaps. 13–14, 21^{1-10} 34–35?
Deutero-Isaiah, *c.* 540.
Haggai, *c.* 520.
Zechariah, chaps. 1–8, *c.* 520.
Malachi, *c.* 460–450.

Probably later, at all events after the Restoration, Joel, Jonah, Obadiah (in present form), Isa. 24–27, Zech. 9–14.

All these prophets have the same general system, but individual doctrines always receive the modification which circumstances and the times require.

1. They all start with the belief in a personal God, whom they name Jehovah. He is God of Israel. He brought them up out of Egypt. He drove out the Amorites before them, whose height was as the cedars. However the Semitic mind reached the idea of God, personality was always an element in this idea. The God might only be one of many, might be only God of this territory or of that, might possess in perfection only this quality or the other, but He was always a person. It is doubtful if any abstract force ever was deified by the Semitic mind. Baal, the god of the

Phœnicians, was not primarily the abstract force of the life of nature, but either the sun, in which this force resided, or, primarily, the personal Creator; though, as far as this earth is concerned, creative energy seeming to reside in the sun, Baal became identified with it. This existence of the personal God, Jehovah, was held so firmly by all the prophets, that it seemed to them to be connection with Him — mission from him—that made any one a prophet. Besides the great attributes of unity and spirituality given to Jehovah in the Law, the prophets assign to Him the loftiest attributes both physical and ethical.[1] It may be safely said that no advance upon the doctrine of God has been made in the New Testament over the Old except in this: the Old Testament deals with Israel as a whole. God loves Israel and calls him: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt." Israel is His firstborn son; individual Israelites are less spoken of. In the New Testament, God through Christ enters into relations with the individual. In the Old, all is national; in the New, all is personal.

2. The next doctrine much made of by the prophets is that of the kingdom of God. When Israel came out of Egypt, it was said to her, "Ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Israel is this kingdom of God. The nations round about are not in the kingdom of God. God reigns over Israel. He has His temple or palace in Israel. He is present there in the luminous smoke over the cherubim. "I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple." There is hardly any truth so fundamental as this, that Israel, the then existing people or nation, in the forms in which it then existed, is the kingdom of God. It is not Israel, it is Israel in the then visible forms of its life, that is God's kingdom. If this be kept in mind, such Psalms as the 2nd, the 72nd, and others are plain enough. It is commonly said that Israel is the

[1] Comp. Ps. 139.

type of the true kingdom of God; that its territory, or Canaan, is a type of a Christian's privileges; that its enemies are a type of the world, the Christian's foe or the Church's foe. If by type be meant illustration or example, then this language may be suitable. But Israel was not a type of the kingdom of God; it was God's kingdom as much, though not so perfectly, as the Christian Church. Its enemies were the enemies of the kingdom of God. That was the form God's kingdom had in those days. It has another form now. The form which as the Christian Church it has now is a more perfect form: it is free from the restrictions of nationality and local limitation; it has got quit of the material or carnal ordinances of sacrifices and divers washings, and special robes and much else. It has not only another but a greatly higher form. Yet the Jewish people, in the form it then had, was no less the kingdom of God than is the Christian Church in the form—admittedly more perfect—which it now has. We look for new heavens and a new earth; and then the kingdom of God shall have still another form, differing how much from the present, who can say?

Accordingly, in reading the prophets, we must read them as speaking of a real kingdom of God when they speak of Israel, speaking of it as it then was. And when we ask ourselves, How much of what each prophet says, may we expect to be literally accomplished? we must bear in mind that the form of the kingdom of God has altered,—that the conditions under which the prophet spoke are gone, and can never return,—that he threw great ideas of the kingdom of God into the conditions of his own day, and looked for their realisation ere these conditions should pass away. But his ideas have not yet been realised, and the conditions of his time have passed. Therefore we must distinguish between his ideas and the form of them, and look for the ideas to be realised, although in quite altered circumstances from those in which he anticipated their fulfilment.

In reading the prophets, we must endeavour to seize their great moral and religious ideas, remembering that the form in which they cast the ideas is peculiar to their time. They are men of ideas or principles. They are men entrusted with the conduct of the kingdom of God. They move it forward; they forecast its issue. Hence the prophets differ in their manner of representing the same truths. They do not contradict one another; but various prophetic ages differ as much as the various ages of the Christian Church. Each prophet has special work to do in his own age, special difficulties to face, special forms of life to apply the truth to. And truth so applied assumes different forms; and a truth that was fundamental and momentous in one age falls into a secondary place in the age succeeding, and another truth comes to the front. It was given to the prophets to develop the truths of the kingdom of God out of the necessities of the successive stages of the national life of Israel. The truth of God was not revealed out of connection with the people's life. The prophets were the leaders in the life of the people,—a life as real and true as the life of the Christian Church. Then, God revealed His truth in the prophets, as well as through institutions and history. Now, He enables men to educe it from the perfect words of Jesus Christ, and of the men who have given an account of Him.

3. But another truth the prophets make much of is the imperfection of Israel. This kingdom of God was not perfect. Indeed, it was so imperfect that it contained in itself the germs of dissolution. The kingdom of God cannot fail, but this form of it must cease. This is the prophetic doctrine of Israel's sin and dissolution. It must be remembered that the prophets were statesmen in the kingdom of God. They were public teachers. Hence it is of the destinies of the kingdom that they speak. They look at Israel's sins as affecting the kingdom, as ensuring its destruction. The individual's sins as burdening his conscience are less referred to. It is in the

Psalms that we find reference to this effect of sin upon the individual soul; in such Psalms, for example, as the 6th, the 32nd, and the 51st. Everything is looked at by the prophets in its reference to the kingdom of God. No doubt they assail individuals; but it is the effect of their sin upon the fortunes of the kingdom that interests the prophets most. "Ah sinful nation," says Isaiah, "a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupted: they have forsaken the Holy One of Israel." Hence, too, even the doctrine of immortality in the Prophets is one of Israel's immortality. The vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel is a vision of Israel's restoration; God will bring the tribes of Israel out of their graves. The doctrine of personal immortality comes out again in the Psalms, such as the 16th and 17th, the 49th, and the 73rd. All that is constitutional, so to speak, finds expression in the prophets; all that is personal, in the Psalms and other poetical books like Job and Ecclesiastes. This doctrine of Israel's dissolution is common to all the prophets. "Behold the eyes of the Lord are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth," [1] says Amos. "Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself," says Hosea. "Samaria shall become desolate: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up." [2] "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps," said Micah, a hundred and twenty years before that catastrophe ensued.

Closely connected with this doctrine of the destruction of Israel is that of Israel's restoration, when purified by the fires of affliction. Not all Israel, but only the remnant shall be saved. "I will bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem," says Joel; "for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be those delivered, as the Lord hath said, and among the remnant, those whom the Lord doth call." [3] "I

[1] Amos 9^8. [2] Hos. 13^{16}. [3] Joel 2^{32} 3^1 (Heb. 3^5 4^1).

will sift the house of Israel among all nations," says Amos, "like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen."[1] "The remnant shall return," says Isaiah.

4. With this destruction and return of Israel is connected the doctrine of the day of the Lord, the great judgment-day. Now these are the main prophetic doctrines. The most fruitful of them all was naturally the doctrine of the kingdom of God, because this could be developed on so many sides. On some of its sides it is identical with the doctrine of the Messiah. This is a doctrine with which I have not yet dealt. The earlier prophets do not refer to it much. The great prophets of the Northern kingdom, Elijah and Elisha, are not represented as referring to it at all. Amos has a single allusion, that about the tabernacle of David, which I have just quoted and that is only an allusion to the Davidic house. It is in the prophecies of the Assyrian age particularly, especially those of the contemporary prophets, Isaiah and Micah that the doctrine of the Messiah is most profoundly developed.

The truths of the Old Testament form a gradual revelation; they are worked out in the history and life of Israel. Hence a truth effloresces—bursts out with a special splendour—at certain epochs of the people's experience. The doctrine of the Messiah appears chiefly in the form of the doctrine of the king. Now, two series of circumstances may bring the kingship into prominence: it will effloresce at the institution of the kingly office, and it will also effloresce at a crisis like that in the time of Ahaz and Hezekiah, when, under the assaults of foreign enemies, the kingly family is threatened with extinction. There are two main epochs of prophecy relating to Messiah the King. The first is the time of the early monarchy, when great hopes were entertained of the

[1] Amos 9^9.

Davidic house, particularly of its first members, David and Solomon. Then the true idea of the king and the kingdom first dawned on men's minds, and those wise and powerful monarchs seemed about to realise it. The second is that time of extreme danger, when the monarchy, threatened with extinction, rallied all the best men about it, and when its true idea again filled their minds, and they refused to allow the thought of its destruction to find a place in their hearts. To the former of these epochs belong the splendid cycle of Messianic Psalms relating to the kingdom, particularly the 2nd and the 110th, perhaps the 72nd, and, as some think, the 45th. To the latter belong the extraordinary prophecies of Immanuel, the Virgin's son, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace, the Everlasting Father, in Isa. 7–10, and those concerning Bethlehem Ephratah in Micah. These are the prophecies of the Messiah's glory.

A third series of Messianic prophecies is of quite another kind. They belong to a later epoch, when destruction did not threaten, but had come upon, Israel; when the people were in exile, and menaced with extinction as a people. Then the idea, not so much of the kingly house—the thoughts connected with which had been almost exhausted by earlier prophets—as of the people itself, the prophetic people, the people entrusted with the truth of God, the messenger of God among the nations, the servant of the Lord upon the earth, took possession of the minds of the prophets and was developed on all sides, in its sorrows and sufferings, in its humility and obedience, in the protection and guardianship of it by God, and in its possession of the truth and the light. This idea of Israel, the Servant of Jehovah, thus expanded, became another very fruitful Messianic truth. But this truth, as I have said, belongs to a later time, to that of the Babylonian Exile, when the people, scattered among the nations, seduced by their idolatries, enslaved by their tyrannical rulers, seemed

melting away, and on the point of losing its very name and existence.

As a specimen of early Messianic prophecies, we may take the 72nd Psalm.[1] The heading is usually rendered 'For Solomon'; but the more correct translation is, 'By Solomon.' The Psalm itself is a prayer for the king of the kingdom of God. "Give the king Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the king's son." The kingdom is a righteous kingdom, and the king has the very righteousness of God. The judgments he executes are such judgments as God would execute, were He king. "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God hath anointed thee with the oil of joy above thy fellows."[2] This is the fundamental idea of the kingdom—righteousness. Out of this all its other characteristics develop. Israel's God is an ethical conception; His kingdom is the perfect realising of human morality. First, the result of this righteousness is peace: the mountains shall bring forth peace to the people. Second, this righteousness ensures eternity to the kingdom; for righteousness contains no element of corruption within it that could, at however remote a time, cause dissolution: "They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure." "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom." And, third, its righteousness ultimately secures its universality. All things decay before righteousness; it is a conquering power. Men from all sides seek the benefits of such a kingdom.

> "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
> And from the River unto the ends of the earth."

The main idea of the Psalm is the thought of a righteous king. Matthew Arnold has emphasised not too strongly the

[1] For a fuller discussion of this important Psalm, cf. Davidson's *Biblical and Literary Essays*, pp. 157–175.

[2] Ps. 45[7].

idea of righteousness. It is the fundamental idea of the kingdom of God. The righteous Lord loveth righteousness. The other truth which may be held the correlative of it is nearly equally prominent in the prophets, namely, the truth that evil is always disastrous. This idea of the vindictive righteousness of God is so prominent in the prophets, that some have held it to be their great moral doctrine. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself."[1] The wicked nations perish by their own wickedness. This is one of the great uses of the Old Testament, that it lays bare the principles of God's government of men. God governed Israel and the peoples on no other principles than He governs us; but the principles of His governing Israel were always apparent; for the prophets announced them. These men were like moral reflectors, in which the principles of God's dealings could always be seen. Hence prophecy has been called the philosophy of history. The prophet was, so to speak, the conscience or consciousness of the historical period in which he lived. And this is, to us in these later times, the chief value of the Old Testament.

The main ideas of the Psalm, I repeat, are those of a righteous king, reigning amid perfect peace, exercising an universal sway, and having a government that shall have no end. These are the thoughts of the Psalm. They are the wishes at least of the writer. He ventures to pray for such a thing for some king or other, for some Jewish king. He does not regard it as a thing impossible, that a Jewish king should reign in God's righteousness, give out God's perfect decisions, and rule over a monarchy embracing mankind.

We ask, of whom does the Psalmist venture to anticipate such things? Well, it seems to me that the main thing, first of all, is the fact of such anticipations existing at all. The Psalmist is speaking of the Jewish king and

[1] Hos. 13^9.

the Jewish kingdom, and in all sobriety he dares express the wish that a king shall reign in righteousness, that his rule shall be one of peace, and that his reign may be over all the earth. He speaks of a Jewish kingdom. The Jewish State was the kingdom of God. It may be difficult to say of whom the writer hopes such things. It seems to me a matter of extremely little importance. It is of the king of the kingdom of God that he hopes them. He may have spoken of Solomon. In those early times high hopes were entertained of him. His name meant prince of peace. God spoke of him to his father, and promised that He would give peace and quiet to Israel in his day. He himself sought wisdom to govern rather than riches, He raised the kingdom of Israel to an empire. His name and power were known both in Europe and in Africa and in the distant Indies. There were on all sides connected with his reign and himself *tendencies*, which if they never went so far as to realise the hopes here expressed, may at least have suggested them. And however it is to be explained, Hebrew prophets did look many a time for the perfect incoming of the kingdom of God in their own day, just as, on the other side, they looked for the great day of the Lord to fall in their own time.

The hearts of the Hebrew prophets were filled with great moral anticipations. No men could detect so sharply as they the subtle moral currents of the world. Their ears and senses were preternaturally acute to the footfalls of Jehovah. They heard Him, as one heard the sound in the mulberry trees; but times and seasons were hid from them. It is not to be regarded as an absurd thing to suppose that some of the early Davidic kings might bring the kingdom to its perfection. However, if such an idea was entertained, the day of disenchantment was at hand. The immoralities and follies of Solomon's later years, the fatal disruption of the kingdom in the days of his successor, must

have effectually dispelled such anticipations. Henceforth the outlook of the prophet is much further forward. Between him and the perfect kingdom and the perfect righteous king there lies the mournful era of Israel's coming dissolution. That era overpast, Israel shall return purified; Judah and Israel shall be re-united under David their king. A new State shall rise, and all nations shall be subject to it:

> "Arise, shine; for thy light is come,
> And the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.
> And the Gentiles shall come to thy light,
> And kings to the brightness of thy rising."

CHAPTER XVII.

The False Prophets.

There is a personage whom we first meet with in the prophecy of Micah who has always appeared to me to be invested with a certain interest. His history and antecedents are obscure; and judgments, by no means unanimous, have been passed on him. The personage I mean is the False Prophet. We find Micah saying: "Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make My people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace. And as for him that putteth not into their mouth, they even sanctify a war against him. Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall have no vision."[1] And of the people who heard these prophets gladly, he says: "If a man should be saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he should be the prophet of this people."[2] And speaking again apparently with reference both to the prophets and to those who believed in them, he says: "Prophesy not, they keep prophesying: they shall not prophesy of these things; indignities have no end."[3] This is the first time that this figure comes conspicuously before us in the prophetic writings, but it is frequently encountered afterwards, and is particularly familiar in the days of Jeremiah, who had much to suffer at the hands of this class.

In the history, no doubt, we meet with such prophets very early; and even Hosea refers to them, saying, when

[1] Mic. $3^{5f.}$. [2] Mic. 2^{11}. [3] Mic. 2^{6}.

he addresses the priests: "Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother,"[1] that is, the community of Israel; but here for the first time the prophetic wrath is concentrated upon them as a distinct class. Jeremiah's indignation against them culminates in his celebrated 23rd chapter; and Ezekiel attacks with equal energy "the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing."[2] He compares them to foxes among the ruins. Among these they dig and burrow, and consequently increase the condition of ruin and downfall. The ruins, of course, symbolise the disordered and broken-down condition of the State. The prophets find themselves at home in these disastrous circumstances; there is employment for them. But their efforts are of a kind fitted only to increase the ruin; their counsels and operations only bring fresh disasters and judgments from the hand of God.

This prophet also uses another figure to describe their conduct: "The people built a bad wall, and these men daubed it with untempered mortar."[3] The people's futile projects for self-defence received the equally futile approval and applause of the prophets. These men had no higher wisdom and delight than the mass of the people; they were unable to suggest any true line of conduct in these disastrous times, and they had not judgment or independence enough to condemn those initiated by the people in their folly. But, being prophets, they must do something to keep up their credit. When a weak man cannot originate anything, he acquires an appearance of strength and wisdom by his hearty approval of the schemes of others, saying, "I approve of this, and give my sanction to it. Indeed, it is the very thing I should have suggested." It is disastrous when a man who is weak and without wisdom and independence is set over other men. His office gives

[1] Hos. 4^5. [2] Ezek. $13^{2ff.}$. [3] Ezek. $13^{10ff.}$.

him an influence which he feels he ought to exercise; and if he has not wisdom and independence, he will weakly daub with his untempered mortar the tottering wall which others build.

From the point of view which we now occupy, it strikes us as strange that there should have been false prophets in Israel. The phenomenon of prophecy was so unique and so unlike anything else, the prophetic inspiration was so directly from God, and the prophet was so much His immediate servant, that we might think there was little room for confusing the true phenomenon with anything else; or for any one imagining himself to be a prophet, if he really was not. Standing as we do now two or three thousand years distant from the scenes of Israel's life, our eye sees only two or three great figures; all else seems almost obliterated and reduced by distance to a level. We observe the imposing figure of the prophet, with his extraordinary powers of prediction, and in some cases of miracle working, and we see almost nothing else. The elements of the life that surrounds him are almost indistinguishable. The complications in which he was involved, the popular interests that he ministered to, the struggles of opposing parties, the darkness and shadows that fell upon the leaders of the people, and perplexed their counsels and paralysed their actions, in a word, the life that surrounded the prophet and beat upon him with its waves, we hardly realise. He is to us merely a grand, solitary figure, with supernatural endowments. And we cannot help imagining him the same imposing figure to his contemporaries. And we wonder that they should ever have disobeyed his word, or that anything like a counterfeit to him should ever have appeared.

But the wonder would be lessened, if we would but look into the moral complications of our own time, or those of any period of history known to us. We have among us the same elements that were among the Israelites. We

have the word of God, with its record of miracles, with multitudes believing it and expounding it with an earnestness little less than prophetic. And it is, no doubt, to many a wonder that more effect is not produced by all this. But when we look into the condition of men's minds in our time, we see how things are. Among a large part of those who do not deny that Scripture is the word of God, or that it contains the record of miraculous occurrences, there is no living belief beyond this condition of merely not denying; and among a number of others we observe an actual disbelief. This disbelief feeds on many things. It is ministered to by all those general conceptions of the human race, and of the universe, which an extended science is so fruitful in producing. And thus the miraculous disappears, and the word of God, which is a miracle, disappears with it.

If we consider the period of history in which Christ lived, the same condition of things is apparent. Though He was the Son of God, men did not find Him to be so. Though He worked profound miracles of grace and power, men found means of getting past these. We are surprised at the blindness of men then, but our own is as great or greater. No doubt the obstacles in our way are not quite the same; but it is the same quality in us that makes obstacles of them. We think that if we saw an actual miracle we should believe. What we desiderate is evidence of them, and for want of it we enable ourselves to dispose of them. The men of Christ's time did not disbelieve in miracles; but they were nevertheless enabled to resist those which He performed, by the simple belief prevalent then, that miracles were not uncommon occurrences. Our scant faith in the supernatural invalidates the miracles to us; their almost too abundant faith in the supernatural invalidated to them the miracles of any particular person.

Thus it appears that it is not God's way to give a

revelation which will carry conviction apart from moral qualities in the mind. There will always be, in every condition of the world, some ground on which the evidence may be evaded. This is a truism, because the conviction to be produced is not mere intellectual credence,—which only goes the length of not denying. The spirit of revelation, in whomsoever manifested, whether in the prophet or in the Saviour or in the word, is not a mere spirit of knowledge, but of life. Revelation in the prophet was not merely a disclosing of truth; it was in every fragment of it a broadening of life in the Church. In all conditions of the world the truth of God attaches itself to moral conditions in men; and by moral conditions it may be repelled: "He that is of the truth heareth My words," —and many times no further account of it can be given.

But in order to understand the Old Testament Scripture anywhere, we must endeavour to realise that there was in Israel a life as various as our own. There were mysteries then as now. Men were perplexed by opposing probabilities as they are still. Conduct was not a straight, luminous path then any more than it is now; it was often covered with darkness, and various roads presented themselves, between which men had to choose. There was among them a divine voice; yet it did not speak directly, but through the voice of men, and there was room to doubt whether the particular voice of man was really God's; or, when competing voices were heard, as now, each claiming to be God's, which was His? They had no criterion by which to decide. From the nature of the case an external criterion was impossible. They had to bring the standard of judgment with them in their own minds. They had to exercise these minds, particularly their moral judgment; and the more the perplexities of life and of public affairs increased, the more room there was for uncertainty.

Hence in the time of Micah, when serious trouble first

began to invade Judah, we find men beginning to criticise the prophetic word, and to question its harmony with the character of Jehovah. They said to the prophets: "Prophesy not: they shall not prophesy of these things, indignities never cease." To which Jehovah by the prophet replies: "Do I change, O house of Jacob? is the Spirit of the Lord impatient? are these my doings? are not my words favourable to him that walketh uprightly?"[1] And even in regard to a greater than Micah, Isaiah himself, men were not afraid to express their impatience and resentment of what they considered his captious criticising manner: "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here something, and there something,"[2]—men were weary of this prophetic pedagogue. And by the time we reach the days of Jeremiah, his fellow-countrymen are not ashamed to tell him to his face that they don't believe him: "Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men to Jeremiah, saying, Thou speakest falsely: the Lord our God hath not sent thee to say, Ye shall not go into Egypt to sojourn there: but Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us."[3] And the wretched captives who carried the prophet with them into Egypt had courage enough left to say to him: "As for the word that thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee."[4] And so far did this spirit go, that a demand was made for a general order to silence Jeremiah and similar prophets,—men came and said to the high priest: "The Lord hath made thee priest . . . that ye should be officers in the house of the Lord, in regard to every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldest put him in the stocks, and in shackles."[5] The people who spoke thus believed in prophecy, as they believed in the priests

[1] Mic. 2^{6}. [2] Isa. 28^{10}. [3] Jer. $43^{2f.}$.
[4] Jer. 44^{16}. [5] Jer. 29^{26}.

as the true expounders of the law. Jehovah did speak to them through His prophets, but Jeremiah was a false prophet. The scene described in Jer. 28 between Hananiah and him is most instructive as to the state of men's minds. Jeremiah asserted that the Captivity would last for two generations; Hananiah predicted that in two years the exiles would return with Jehoiachin at their head. The wish being father to the thought, the people naturally gave their voices for Hananiah; and for the time Jeremiah was put to silence.

Now, there were several things which, it has been supposed, might have served the people as external criteria of the true prophecy. Such things were the prophetic ecstasy, miracle, and the verification of the prophetic word by fulfilment in events. But while, in simple cases, these things might be regarded as accompaniments, or even tokens of true prophecy, yet when used as a test to discriminate between one prophet and another, they were liable to fail. Excitation, in greater or less degree, and even complete ecstasy, was a thing natural to an Oriental people: it was perhaps more natural when great truths were fresh, and breaking for the first time on men's minds, or when a national crisis occurred which was new and not hitherto experienced in history. In the early prophetic period, excitation was probably common; the prophetic language used later appears to be formed upon it, *e.g.*, such words as 'vision,' 'see,' 'hear,' and the like.

Excitation was, however, no essential element in true prophecy. It is not mentioned in connection either with Moses or Samuel. On one occasion Elisha asked for a minstrel, and while the minstrel played the 'hand of the Lord' came upon him. Isaiah refers to it twice.[1] It was, perhaps, more common all throughout prophecy than we usually suppose; and though the words 'see,' 'hear,' 'hand of the Lord' may have at a later time been used in a less strict sense

[1] Isa. 6 and 8^{11}.

of the prophetic intuition, unaccompanied by any extreme excitation, their occurrence always deserves investigation. But, obviously, so common a phenomenon as ecstasy could be no test of true prophecy. It was no evidence that a prophet was true; neither was it any evidence that he was false. On the contrary, it can readily be seen how it may have given rise to confusion of judgment on the part of onlookers, or, what was worse, may have led the man himself, who was affected by it, to regard himself as truly inspired. For, in early times, no doubt the inspiration was an inference from the ecstasy. The man was seen to be in the hands of a power which was considered external to him. It was a god or God in whose grasp he was.

Miracle might certainly be in some circumstances an evidence and test of true prophecy. It was so on Mount Carmel, when, at Elijah's word, fire from heaven consumed the sacrifice and licked up the water in the trench. Yet the subsequent history leaves us in great doubt as to the permanence of the moral influence even of this great wonder. In the Old Testament 'miracle' merely means wonder: it is something extraordinary, nothing more. Any additional element of meaning arising from the idea of 'law' could not belong to it, because the idea of law did not exist. The question, therefore, is not what impression the Old Testament miracles make on us now, but how the people of Israel regarded them then. And there were several ways of thinking about miracles, which tended to rob them of their force as tests or evidences.

In the first place, the working of wonders was not regarded as an exclusive prerogative of Jehovah, or of His true servants. Moses performed wonders in Egypt, turning water into blood, and filling the land with frogs; but it is said that "the magicians also did so with their enchantments."[1] We nowadays may have our own opinion of the

[1] Ex. $7^{11.\ 22}$ 8^{7}.

powers and operations of the magicians; but the faith of the ancient world was more simple, and its credulity greater. In this particular instance the Mosaic miracles did, no doubt, outbid those of the magicians; but such conflicts were rare, or rather the instance is unique.

Again, in Deut. $13^{1ff.}$ it is said: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying [at the same time that he said], Let us go after other gods . . . thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet . . . for Jehovah your God proveth you . . ." Here a 'false' prophet performs a wonder. It is Jehovah that empowers him. But the miracle, far from authenticating the prophet, has quite another purpose, namely, to prove the people whether they love Jehovah their God with all their heart. The meaning of a miracle, therefore, might be ambiguous; and this of necessity invalidated its use as a test of true prophecy. The passage, however, while withdrawing attention from external signs, such as miracles, concentrates it upon the true test, which was, of course, not anything external, but 'the sure word of prophecy,' the first article of the people's faith, that Jehovah alone was God of Israel. And to all this has to be added the fact that, from Amos downwards, miracles play hardly any part in the history of prophecy; while it was just in the last days of the kingdom of Judah that false prophecy became most rampant.

The third test, the verification of the prophet's word in fulfilment, is one proposed by Scripture itself.[1] But, important as this criterion was, it was one which was serviceable less to individuals than to the *people*, since its life was continuous, and its identity and consciousness, even after a long period, were the same. As a guide to the conduct of individuals, at the moment when the prediction was uttered,

[1] Deut. 18^{21}.

such a criterion could be of little avail. Occasionally there were predictions given that had reference to the near future, as when Micah ben Jimlah predicted the defeat of Ahab at Ramoth-Gilead, or when Jeremiah foretold the death of Hananiah within the year. But usually the prophecies referred to the destinies of the State, and were thrown into a somewhat indefinite future. This peculiarity perplexed men's minds, and led them to despair of, or at least to disparage, prophecy. They said, "The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth"; or, if they did not go so far, they said of the prophet, "The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off."[1] The criterion of fulfilment was one for the use of the people, with its prolonged historical life: "Whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, they shall know that a prophet hath been among them."[2]

The criterion of fulfilment was one available chiefly on the grand scale, when applied to the general scope of the prophetic predictions. This scope was to the effect that the destruction of the State was imminent because of the sins of the people. It is now a commonplace that prophecy did not, even in the main, consist of prediction. The commonplace is true, if predictions of mere contingent occurrences of a private nature be meant. Prophecy was occupied with the destinies of the kingdom of God. But the essence of prophecy is prediction—prediction not only of the far distant consummation and glory of the kingdom, but also of the nearer steps necessary to this, the downfall of the State, and the instruments who shall accomplish it. The *rationale* of predictive prophecy is given in Isa. 41. Jehovah is the First and the Last. He initiates the movement of mankind's advance, leads it on, and rounds it off. From the beginning He foresees the end. But it is His relation to Israel that causes Him to declare it, because this end is a condition to which His people must

[1] Ezek. $12^{22.\ 27}$. [2] Ezek. 2^{5}.

attain. It can be attained, however, only by their voluntary and conscious striving after it. Therefore they must be enlightened both in regard to it, and the way to it. The fundamental principle of Hebrew philosophy is the same as that of prophecy. God is fulfilling Himself in all things,—in mankind no less than in other things. But man's peculiarity is that he can understand the divine process, can throw himself voluntarily into the current, and thus make himself and the world and God to be one.

From all these things it is plain that, in order to understand the forms and ramifications of this false prophecy, a very minute and extended acquaintance with the history is necessary. The designation 'false prophecy' is not used in the Old Testament, and is very general. False prophecy was a thing of many varieties. It arose from many sources, and took on many colours. It was as various as the sections and parties, whether religious or political, in the State. It might be the mouthpiece of an undiluted idolatry. Or it might represent the mistaken patriotism of the time. Or it might express the mere sensuality and resolution to live at ease, which is apt to seize men in the face of extreme peril: "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." Those were false prophets, through whom Jehovah did not speak. Of course, this is true; and perhaps sometimes we can say no more. The false prophet's mind was not illuminated by the true light. In every case of false prophecy this holds good. Still, to say that those were false prophets through whom Jehovah did not speak, though true, is not all that can, or should, be said.

The converse proposition is equally true, and brings us more into the heart of the subject: Jehovah did not speak through these prophets, because they were false. The thing that lies behind the fact that the Lord did not speak by them is really the interesting thing. For the prophetic gift was

not a gift isolated, or merely magical and marvellous: it was a gift connected with the principles of the covenant religion. The spirit of prophecy was the spirit of the covenant, of the religion of Israel, expressing it, unfolding it, applying it to the people's necessities, and opening up its great issues and final perfection.

What made the false prophets false, therefore, must have been some fundamental error in their relation to the principles of the religion of Israel. But there was abundant room for errors of this kind, because the religion of Israel was, of course, not only a religion but a morality, and, in addition, it was a polity. Now, the policy of Israel was not a haphazard one, or grounded merely on expediency or opportunism; it was based on definite principles. But these principles might easily be misapprehended, and false advice be given by men not in themselves, perhaps, vicious or notoriously ungodly.

Thus it will readily be perceived that there might be two classes of false prophets: (1) Those who were not properly prophets of Jehovah at all, but prophets of Baal or Milcom, or any other deity, not the God of Israel. It might seem that this would not be a numerous class. And perhaps those who were simply anti-Jehovistic were not numerous. But those were not few, perhaps, who were syncretistic, who combined in their pantheon Jehovah and other gods also. Jeremiah mentions prophets of Baal as existing in his day. And we are familiar with Ezekiel's chambers of imagery. But Zephaniah alludes to the more numerous class when he speaks of those who swear by Jehovah and also swear by Milcom.[1] The condition of things in that age was unspeakably perplexed. Calamity upon calamity had fallen upon the State. Jehovah seemed no longer to protect it. Men said, "My way is hid from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God."[2] They said, "Jehovah seeth us

[1] Zeph. 1^5. [2] Isa. 40^{27}: cf. 49^{14}.

not; Jehovah hath forsaken the land."[1] And they turned to other gods for succour. The captives in Egypt speak thus to Jeremiah: "We will not hearken to thy word . . . but we will burn incense to the queen of heaven, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings, and our princes . . . for then had we plenty of bread, and we were well, and saw no evil."[2] So ill-instructed were men, and such elements of confusion existed in the State, and so severe were human sufferings, that in their misery men turned to one god after another, hopeful that some of them might help them. And every movement of this sort had its mouthpiece—its prophet.

Closely connected with this syncretism, which united other gods along with Jehovah, were the many forms that a low prophecy assumed as means of reaching truth. Wherever there was worship, there was something resembling prophecy. The nations around Israel, just like the Greeks, had it in various forms. It was everywhere the expression of the mind of the Deity. Now, these Canaanitish methods penetrated into Israel. The tribes absorbed the inhabitants, but the practices of the latter lived on, and helped to corrupt the true prophetic gift. It was the same thing that happened, when Christianity was accepted by the nations of Europe. It purified them to some extent, but they corrupted it. Their idolatries were many times merely baptized. Their temples became churches, but in many ways the old worship went on in them. Their exquisite statues of Apollo and Ceres became martyrs and virgins. The truth was not extinguished. A central fire was still burning; but the extremities became cold and material. So the true prophetic gift did not expire in Israel; but in many instances it became allied with heathen practices, such as necromancy, and witchcraft, and the various kinds of sooth-saying by means of arrows, and rods, and ventriloquism. All those forms are proscribed in Scripture as corruptions

[1] Ezek. 8^{12}. [2] Jer. 44^{17}.

of the true prophecy; and Isaiah condemns those that chirp and mutter, and seek for the living to the dead. Nevertheless, even his condemnation did not destroy them out of the land. This, then, was one side of the false prophecy. It was objectively false. This side is of less interest. Its chief interest lies in the illustration it affords of how the highest gifts may degenerate, and how the fire of truth may cool down and radiate out its warmth into surrounding elements, and finally die out; and that this may happen even with a supernatural gift, for supernatural gifts and supernatural truth, when brought down into the region of human life, must in some degree be subjected to the laws that operate there.

(2) But there was another class of false prophets who were prophets of Jehovah. There was not unanimity on many occasions among the Jehovah prophets. Men who in objective religious opinions agreed, at least superficially, and who practised no forbidden methods of reaching the divine will, but regarded it in common as a thing revealed in the heart, were found not infrequently to give forth as Jehovah's word conflicting judgments. They advised contrary steps in a political emergency, or they predicted diverse issues in regard to some enterprise on which they were consulted. Thus, in connection with the expedition against Ramoth Gilead, the king of Israel gathered together four hundred prophets, who said to him, "Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." But Micah ben Jimlah said, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have not a shepherd."[1] Now, the four hundred were false prophets, and Micah was a true prophet. The Lord spoke by him, and not by them. That is true. But is it all that can be said? Why did the Lord not speak by these prophets? His speaking or not speaking by them cannot have been a mere occurrence, isolated, and in no connection with history, or

[1] 1 Kings 22.

with the general conduct of these prophets, or their relation to true theocratic principles. A very significant hint is given in reference to these prophets and their relations to the king, and his character and theocratic conduct, in the words he utters regarding Micah: "I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." These prophets prophesied good to godless and idolatrous princes, such as Ahab was; the other, like the prophets who followed him, could prophesy nothing but evil to such men,—they could only express the law of Jehovah's righteous government, that disaster follows sin. In the opposing judgments of Micah and the four hundred, we see a wholly different view in regard to the nature of Jehovah and His kingdom, and in regard to the character and rule of Ahab.

Ewald, in his very instructive remarks on Prophecy, prefixed to his *Prophets of the Old Testament*, signalises three lines along which true prophecy might move subjectively towards corruption. These were, first, the prophetic ecstasy, which ought properly to be under the control of the prophet, but might not unnaturally become excessive and pass into mere frenzy, thus corrupting and confusing the clearness of the prophetic revelation, and issuing in fanaticism. We are familiar with excesses of this sort at periods of profound religious awakening, as at the Reformation and during the Parliamentary war in England. God's highest gifts need the conserving influence and regulation of the broader and fundamental gift which He has given to all men, even Reason; they are liable to be drawn into the service of the anarchical elements in our nature, which they readily serve to their greater inflammation.

Second, another source of corruption lay just in the very nature of the prophetic inspiration as a subjective illumination. This being a condition of mind, the true prophet might be conscious of it, and infallibly sure; but the condition could not be passed objectively from him to others, that

they might examine it. Hence, while a true prophet was conscious of being true, a false prophet might not be conscious of being false. The evidence, like that in faith or justification, was positive, but not negative. No doubt, there generally exists a certain negative evidence, but that arises from the positive evidence expressing itself outwardly in actions, or inwardly in emotions, to the test of which a man may then bring himself. Jeremiah is never weary of thus objectivising himself, in the face of the false prophets. He is convinced they have not his experiences; the word of the Lord does not come to them as he felt it come to him, like a fire in his bones, which he could not endure. Jeremiah has more self-consciousness than any other prophet. This arises partly from the fact that, though a timid man, he was called to take a first place in his country's service at a very unquiet time; and partly from the opposition he endured, especially from the false prophets, over-against whom he had to set himself and his experiences with the view of making their falsehood conspicuous: and this makes him the most interesting prophetic figure in the Old Testament.

The third cause of corruption lay in the tendency of prophecy to become a profession, and thus to draw into its ranks many who merely sought a living. To investigate this source of corruption fully, we should have to trace the history of the so-called schools of the prophets. We know little about these associations. It has been supposed that they were schools or colleges, where, under the superintendence of some older prophet, young men studied the law and history of Israel, and were initiated into the principles of the theocracy, and thus fitted to be themselves instructors of the people, and prophets if called to be so. It is probable that these associations had not any such formal character. There were young men among them, but there is no reason to suppose they were universally or generally young. It seems certain, however, that the associations had a practical object.

Men met together to encourage one another, to vivify to one another the truths of religion, and to awaken in one another enthusiasm for them. With this object they practised music also. But the object set before the mind seems to have been at first personal rather than public. The so-called schools were brotherhoods rather than seminaries. Yet out of these brotherhoods men went forth filled with a sacred enthusiasm for the service of Jehovah, and became prophets to the people. The history mentions these associations only when the course of events naturally requires them to be mentioned. This is the case in the reign of Ahab. We know him as a persecutor of the 'sons of the prophets.' This appellation makes it probable that they lived under the superintendence or direction of one, or more than one, highly honoured prophet; and this probability is confirmed by the narratives of their relation to Elijah, and especially to Elisha.

It is unfortunate that we know so little of these associations. But there are two things of interest connected with them. They were probably the expression of a rising religious enthusiasm, which brought the members of the brotherhood together, and which they fostered among one other; and this religious life it was, no doubt, their object to awaken among the people. But though this much seems plain from the name 'prophets,' common to them with our canonical prophets, and from the connection some of these maintained with them, yet it is remarkable that none of our canonical prophets appears to have sprung out of these brotherhoods.

Now, these prophets existed in great numbers. They were a class. Ahab gathered together four hundred of them. Obadiah hid a hundred in caves from the rage of Jezebel. It was impossible but that degeneracy should creep into so numerous a body. They were dependent for their living on gifts, and not unnaturally they were desirous to please the givers. They were consulted on all important occasions, and they were tempted, like Ahab's four hundred, to give

an answer agreeable to the inquirer. In this manner, however, prophecy became a profession, almost a business. And we must not assume that in the case of every prophet there was any such crisis and startling call to the office as is reported of Isaiah and Jeremiah. All true prophets felt called, but there might be nothing external or apparent in the circumstances of their call. This third source of corruption was perhaps not productive of great degeneracy. Still prophesying became a fashion. Men assumed the hairy mantle who had no real call. They affected the prophetic manner and speech, saying, "Thus saith the Lord," and "This is the burden of the Lord"; and some did this with conscious falsehood, and merely for a livelihood. Some tendency to this manifested itself early. Amaziah the priest at Bethel says to Amos: "Seer, go, flee into the land of Judah, and there prophesy, and there eat bread." Amos repudiates the charge of prophesying for a living: "I am neither a prophet, nor a Ben-Nabhi (a candidate for the office of prophet). I am a herdsman. And the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy to My people Israel." [1]

Those prophets who were objectively false, who were prophets of false gods, or used false methods, to reach the voice of God, such as practices of soothsaying, are of less interest; and so also are those who were consciously false, and used their office merely for hire or personal aggrandisement. The real interest of false prophecy gathers around the prophets who were self-deceived. What made self-deception possible was the fact that the prophetic illumination was an internal one. What gave such opportunities for self-deception was the perplexed condition of affairs, when counsels were so divided, and the most diverse steps recommended. Now we do not find that the answers or counsels of these false prophets were, as a rule, mere isolated falsehoods. There is a spirit of false prophecy equally with a spirit of

[1] Amos 7^{12-15}.

true prophecy. The spirit of true prophecy is the spirit of the theocracy, breathes its principles, expresses its morality, and opens up its necessary and certain issues. The spirit of false prophecy is the untheocratic spirit,—the spirit that has not taken in its principles, and does not reflect its morality, and cannot project before it the true issue of the kingdom of God. In every case almost where we observe Jeremiah opposing the false prophets, the latter appear to be persons pursuing aims alien to those of the theocracy.

There were several distinct lines on which Jeremiah opposed the false prophets. One was the political line, another the moral, and a third the personal. The true prophets had two or three political principles which they always insist upon, such as to avoid entangling alliances, to cultivate peace and not aspire to be a warlike nation, and in danger to rely upon Jehovah. The ideal condition of the kingdom of God when universal was peace, and that which was destined to be the universal condition ought to be the condition of the theocracy at all times. Hence we read: "Asshur shall not save us; we will no more ride upon horses";[1] and again: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of Jehovah our God."[2] These principles are all just fragments of the one great principle, that the theocratic State is not a kingdom of this world. This is the true theocratic idea, and it finds expression in true prophecy. The opposite idea, namely, that Israel should take her place among the nations, be a warlike State, ride on horses, and build fenced cities, and when threatened seek alliances for her defence, is an untheocratic idea, and finds abundant expression in the false prophecy.

One can readily perceive, however, how easily the true theocratic principles might be described as unpatriotic; and in point of fact Jeremiah was in danger of his life from this cause. "And the princes said unto the king, Let this man,

[1] Hos. 14^3. [2] Ps. 20^7.

we pray thee, be put to death: forasmuch as he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people . . . for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt."[1] The false prophecy in political things was based upon fundamentally false conceptions of the nature of the theocracy. The true prophets felt that the essence of the kingdom of God lay in the relation of the people to Jehovah, not in the external form. Jehovah would care for the external safety. The false prophets looked only to the external form, and sought to uphold it by purely external means.

Again, the most frequent collisions between Jeremiah and the false prophets occurred on the line of morals. The false prophets had not a stringent morality. Some of them were personally immoral. But that is not what is meant. Their conception of morality, of what the theocratic State should be, and of what judgments must fall upon it from God if it do not realise this ideal, was far from elevated or strict. Hence they did not regard the condition of society as at all desperate. There was nothing in it that appeared to them to demand God's judgment. Accordingly, they preached peace when there could not be peace: "They healed the hurt of the people slightly." Their notions of morality were superficial. They could not think that the Lord would overthrow His own house and banish His own people. They pointed to the buildings on Mount Zion, saying, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord is this."[2]

It was this frightful insensibilty to moral conditions that roused Jeremiah almost to the pitch of frenzy: "Concerning the prophets mine heart within me is broken; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome. . . . For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in My house have I found their wickedness."[3] To Jeremiah the wickedness of the land made the Exile

[1] Jer. 38^4. [2] Jer. 7^4. [3] Jer. 23^9.

inevitable; and those who did not perceive it, but misled the people, filled him with indignation. In answer to their cry, "The temple of the Lord is this," he told them that the temple at Jerusalem would share the fate of the temple at Shiloh; and to those who relied on Jehovah's protection for His house, he said that they made His temple a cave of robbers, where they thought they were safe after perpetrating their murderous deeds.

This low conception of theocratic morality was at the bottom of much of the false prophecy. The false prophets were superficial men in this sense,—naturally many of them were worse; they practised the vices which they were so ready to overlook: "They have wrought folly in Israel, and committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken words in My name falsely."[1] But, in general, without going this length, they had no deep sense of evil and its consequences. Hence they said, "Evil shall not come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine."[2] In opposition to this spirit such a prophet as Micah comes forward, saying, "Truly, I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin";[3] and Jeremiah goes so far that he almost considers it the mark of a true prophet that he preach calamity and judgment from the God of Israel. For his assurance and announcement that Jerusalem should fall before the Chaldeans was not founded on his belief that so small a power as Judah could not resist the Babylonian empire. He had no such idea as that. The Babylonian empire was in Jehovah's hand, as all things else were. Jeremiah's assurance was the outcome of his profound conviction of the people's sinfulness, for which Jehovah must bring the State to an end. The optimism of the false prophets was based on their conception of Jehovah's power; the pessimism of the true prophets, on their conception of His ethical being.

[1] Jer. 29^{23}. [2] Jer. 5^{12}. [3] Mic. 3^{8}.

The third line on which Jeremiah met the false prophets was the personal line. They had not the evidences in their person of a true prophet. They wanted his earnestness and convictions. Hence this prophet perpetually anatomises himself for the purpose of confounding these prophets, and he goes the length of saying that they know that they have not the spirit of true prophecy within them. In this consciousness of wanting the real source of inspiration in themselves, they clutched at prophecies by others, which they retailed to the people and used as their own. "Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal My words every one from his neighbour. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy lying dreams." [1]

Just as the true prophecy of Israel was not a thing dependent on the arbitrary will of God merely, and of which no account could be given, but was a thing in connection with the covenant religion and the theocracy, the spirit of prophecy, being God's Spirit in the prophet, working on this and illuminating it; so the false prophecy of Israel is not a thing of which no account can be given, and without roots. It is the expression of the untheocratic spirit in Israel in its various forms. It has its roots deep down in the popular thinking and life.

The ethical conception of Jehovah held by the canonical prophets created a cleavage between Him and the people. It was no more Jehovah *with* Israel, but Jehovah *versus* Israel. This explains what is very curious in the prophets,—their gradual abandonment of the idea of the kingdom of God as a State, and their movement towards that conception of it which is called a Church. What was essential in the kingdom of God was not its form, but its nature,—the godliness of the people. Perish the State! Long live the community of believers!

This was the patriotism of the prophets: that of the

[1] Jer. 23^{30}.

false prophets was much more intelligible. And this ethical nature of true prophecy is really its characteristic, and that by which it is to be estimated, and not by the literal fulfilment of its predictive details. The predictions were only embodiments of the ethical and religious principles, projections often so ideal that they could not be realised. But the great general scope of the prophetic outlook regarding the destinies of the kingdom of God, whether nearer or more remote, was verified. And, as has been said, it was in the region of this general scope that the true prophets came into conflict with that other class of prophets whom the verdict of history has pronounced false.

Modern writers on prophecy have exhibited a good deal of sympathy with the false prophets, and one scholar has expressed his regret that all their productions have perished, and that we have only the judgment of their adversaries upon them, and cannot hear them in their own defence. It would certainly be interesting to us if we had some fragments of their literary labours preserved to us. But perhaps we may acquiesce in the judgment of their countrymen who allowed them to perish, or, at any rate, in the judgment of providence and time which has destroyed them, and conclude that they were not worth preserving.

It is admitted that, judged from the point of view of a pure spiritual Jehovah worship and a lofty morality such as men now recognise, and such as the canonical prophets habitually preached, these prophets were false. Their position and aims and requirements from men were below this ideal standard. This is admitted by their defenders, but it is said that this was more their misfortune than their fault. It was not due to any declension on their part, but to an advance on the part of the prophets called true, which outran the abilities both of the people in general and of the body of the prophets. The true prophets, as we call them, were always in a minority, because the nation

could not keep pace with them. And the prophets called false were so because, like the people, they moved more slowly, adhered to a former standing-point, and were thus left behind by the more advanced prophets and denounced by them. But the denunciation was inconsiderate; the true prophets forgot that the divergence or opposition between them and those they denounced was due to their own onward march, which had left others behind, who in a former age might have been regarded as occupying a very good position.

Now, this view, of course, raises a very interesting question, namely, whether the true prophets successively changed their position, advancing always towards a more purely spiritual conception of Jehovah and His worship, and towards a more inward and severe morality? Such an advance may have taken place. But our decision on this question will not affect our judgment on the question whether the one class were true prophets of the religion of Jehovah and the other false, nor our conclusion that their falsehood proceeded from, or expressed itself in, views regarding Jehovah and the moral life of His people which were inadequate, and did not correspond to those that the successive epochs at which they appeared required from men who had attained to true conceptions of the covenant religion. We may, however, feel that we can take a more lenient view of the individual men among these prophets, allow more weight to the perplexities in which they must have been involved, and to the circumstances that determined their minds; and this, by giving a broader scope to our view of the times and of human thought, will not be a loss, but a gain to ourselves. And we shall wonder more and more at that divine light cast into the minds of the prophets, whose writings have become the heritage of mankind, which enabled them on each occasion to interpret Jehovah's nature rightly to the people, and to give them counsel always in the line of the true principles of the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Messianic Prophecy.

The term Messiah (מָשִׁיחַ) means 'anointed.' The name was applied both to the theocratic king and to the priest. The phrase 'the Lord's anointed' is frequently applied by David to Saul, the first king of Israel. As applied to a certain future king, for whom, at a particular stage in the history of Israel, prophets and people began to look, the title is perhaps taken from the 2nd Psalm: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His anointed" (מְשִׁיחוֹ). Whether the allusion have reference to this special king in the mind of the author of the Psalm or not, certainly about the time of our Lord this passage was generally expounded of the expected king; and the name 'Son of God,' also applied to Him, is probably taken from the same Psalm. Hence Peter in answer to the query, "Whom say ye that I am?" replied, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus accepted the designation, adding that not flesh and blood, but His Father had revealed this truth to His disciple. The name is supposed by many to be already given to this expected king in Dan. 9^{25}: "From the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks,"—though for 'the Messiah' in this passage the Revised Version has substituted 'the anointed one,' which may refer to any high priest or ruler.

It seems evident that the name Messiah had not become a proper name, nor specifically the name of a future expected

king, when the second half of Isaiah was written; for in Isa. 45[1] the term is applied to Cyrus: "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed" (His Messiah), "to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him." But it was quite currently used of the expected king or deliverer in the age of Christ; for even the woman of Samaria employs it, saying to Jesus at the well, "I know that Messias cometh; when He is come, He will tell us all things"; and Jesus again claimed to be this expected Messiah: "I that speak unto thee am He."[1]

Now, this Messianic conception, used in this strict sense, was part of the eschatological views of the prophets; that is, belonged to what might be called the eschatology of the kingdom of God, with which the prophets occupy themselves, as distinguished from the eschatology of the individual. This king belongs to the latter days, the time of the end, the final perfection of the kingdom of God upon the earth. And I need not remark that the conception of heaven, so familiar to us, was unknown to the prophets,—I mean, heaven as the abode or final dwelling-place of the perfected people of God. Heaven was the abode of God; the abode of man was earth. The perfection of the people of God was attained not by their being translated to the sphere of God's abode but by His coming down and dwelling among them. In all the Old Testament prophets, the Church of God made perfect still dwells upon the earth, though it is a transfigured earth.

The picture drawn of this final condition may appear to our minds a singular union of the natural and the miraculous, of the ordinary conditions of human life with a presence of God which might seem to render them impossible. And probably the pictures drawn could not in truth be realised. They are the result of two great conceptions combined,—a very realistic idea of man and human life, which regarded man altogether as he is seen, a being complex, but a unity

[1] John $3^{25f.}$.

of body and mind, and who therefore required a physical sphere to afford scope and play to his powers; and, secondly, a very vivid idea of God as the source of all life and power in man, and of His presence as the source of all blessedness. Thus the sphere of the people of God made perfect was still the earth, but with the full manifestation of God among them; and this manifestation many times introduces elements into the picture which seem incompatible with the circumstances of a life of man upon the earth, as for example in Isa. 4[5]: "The Lord will create over the whole habitation of Mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for over all the glory shall He spread a canopy."

This perfection of the people of God was attained when Jehovah was present in His fulness for salvation among them. This presence of their God is usually considered a manifestation of Himself in His own person. Thus in Isa. 40 we read: "Hark! one crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way of our God. O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God! He shall feed His flock like a shepherd. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." And in Ps. 102: "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for it is time to pity her; yea, the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and have pity upon her dust. So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord. For the Lord hath built up Zion, He hath appeared in His glory." Both these passages, and there are many similar ones, speak of Jehovah's manifestation in His own person. But there is another set of passages in which the Lord's revelation of Himself is represented as taking place not in His own person, but in that of a great theocratic king, in whom He would be manifested in all His power and glory

for the salvation and peace of His people. Such a passage is that in Isa. 9: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever."

In the Old Testament these two lines of divine manifestation do not seem yet to be reconciled. But in the New Testament they coalesce. Jehovah's manifestation of Himself for salvation was understood to be His manifestation in the Messiah. Hence the passage in Isa. 40 is referred in the Gospels to Christ, and the passage in Ps. 102 is interpreted in the Epistle to the Hebrews also of the Christian Messiah. It is probable that it was the history of Jesus which led the New Testament writers to this amalgamation. They saw in Jesus the manifestation of God,—a manifestation often promised in the Scriptures, though, in some instances at least, the exegesis of the synagogue had not referred such passages to the hoped-for Messiah.

The fact that the Messianic hope was expected to be verified in the last times, gave it certain peculiarities. One of these was that there was a great amount of idealism in all the Messianic prophecies. This idealism was often, of course, poetical. Exquisite pictures were drawn of the fertility of the earth,—corn waved on the tops of the mountains, and shook like Lebanon; and also of the felicity of men. But it is chiefly a moral idealism that characterises the representations. It is freedom from evil, no doubt, partly in a physical sense, but chiefly in a moral sense. This is seen in all the Messianic prophecies, from the first downwards. And with the idealism there is necessarily combined a certain amount of generality. How much meaning our first parents may have found in the early promise given to them, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," may

be difficult to say. The precise sense which we are now able to express by the words can hardly have been suggested to them. But they could be assured that the family of mankind would yet achieve a victory over the author of their calamitous transgression. And as the meaning and consequences of what had befallen them became clearer, so would their conception of what was meant by bruising the serpent's head, and how alone that could be done.

In like manner, when it was said to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed,"[1] there is in the promise a great generality both as to time and manner. It could not soon be fulfilled; and there might be room for conjecture even as to the manner. Yet the patriarch, knowing wherein his own blessedness lay,—in his knowledge of God and fellowship with Him,—would probably surmise that through his seed this true knowledge of God would reach all peoples. The same general sense is obtained even if we translate:[2] In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth bless or felicitate themselves, that is, use his name, his felicity and destiny in wishing good to themselves, the same good, namely, as had accrued to him; and this good was, or at all events came from, his relation to his God—the true God.

If we consider the early time at which this hope was cherished, it becomes very astonishing. The passages in any case are earlier than the prophetic age. The prophecy of Jacob, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come,"[2] is obscure, and the true rendering uncertain. The Septuagint renders: "Until that which is his shall come";[3] and the words so pointed may be read: "Till he shall come whose it is."[4] At all events, there is the same projection into the distant future and the same vagueness

[1] Gen. 12^3 18^{18}. [2] Gen. 49^{10}.
[3] Sept. *τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ*; Aq. and Symm. *ᾧ ἀπόκειται*,
[4] Cf. Ezek. 21^{32}: עַד־בֹּא אֲשֶׁר לוֹ הַמִּשְׁפָּט.

as in the other prophecies. The name Shiloh may perhaps mean 'the peaceful one,' or if otherwise pointed it may mean 'peace.' If the rendering 'until he come to Shiloh' be adopted, the reference must be to a historical occurrence. But these poetical prophecies uniformly refer to a distant future, and no event in the history of Judah can be found to verify a reference to the historical locality, Shiloh.

With regard, however, to these early prophecies, it may be made a question how much importance is to be attached to them. The history in which we find them, or at least much of it, was probably not written down till the period of the monarchy; and even supposing the poetical passages to be older, it is not impossible that they may have undergone some alteration at the hands of the writer who inserted them in his history, and thus that some parts of them may reflect the modes of thought current during the kingly and prophetic ages. Writers on Old Testament theology are feeling themselves constrained to say that the religious conceptions which appear in histories and narratives can be certainly held to be true expressions of belief only for the time at which the histories were written down, and not for the remote periods which they may describe. The writers necessarily threw back their own modes of thought upon the earlier times of which they wrote.

There may be undue scepticism in this position, but there is no doubt also some ground for it. For the Old Testament writers were not so much concerned about historical accuracy in delineating the past, or in maintaining the strictly historical colours of preceding times in their distinction from one another, as in edifying their own contemporaries. The writers were in the main prophetic men, whose aims in writing history were similar to their aims in their prophetic discourses. And even supposing the writer to write down the traditions exactly as they had come to him, which probably was rarely the case, these

traditions had descended through many ages, and would certainly in the course of transmission be subjected to changes, and would assume forms or gather elements belonging to the different periods through which they passed. This is the fate of all unwritten traditions and histories, although poetical compositions are less liable to change than others.

At the same time, there is this general question which requires consideration. Certainly, in the periods of Israel's history known to us, there is revealed a singular tendency to look forward to the future and project ideals into it, and to dwell upon the significance of Israel in the religious development of mankind. This is just the peculiarity of the prophets. The question is, How early did this peculiarity appear? May not such thoughts have occupied the minds of the patriarchs—the fathers of Israel? The Old Testament reposes on the idea that God revealed His purposes to men. We do not doubt this in the case of the prophets. Are we justified in doubting it of a much earlier period?

The Messianic age belonging to the future, and being therefore largely ideal, that is, being constructed out of great conceptions of the kingdom of God, such as God's presence, righteousness, peace, earthly felicity regarded as perfectly realised, any great and significant factor of the life or faith of the people of God may be expected to find a place in it. The Messianic is usually held to circle around the three great figures, prophet, priest, and king. But the basis is broader than this. The Messianic age being the time of the Church's perfection, any element that enters into the life of men, as an essential factor of it, may be idealised and made prominent. In point of fact, there is little idealising of the prophet. He was already so fully the organ of Jehovah, inspired by His Spirit, that he was not susceptible of further idealisation. In the final period of perfection he rather finds no place, for the prayer of

Moses is then answered: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets!" As represented by Joel, the Lord pours out His spirit upon all flesh; and all prophesy, and see visions, and dream dreams, even the servants and the handmaidens. And the same idea appears in other prophets also: "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them";[1] "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."[2]

The passage, Deut. $18^{14ff.}$, applied in a Messianic sense in the New Testament is rather an indirect than a strictly Messianic prophecy: "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I command him." The connection shows that the reference is not to any particular prophet, but rather to true prophecy in general, to the prophetic office. The preceding verses prohibit the people from consulting charmers, or those with familiar spirits, or wizards, or necromancers, for all their practices are an abomination unto the Lord. The nations, he continues, addressing Israel, which thou shalt dispossess hearkened unto observers of times and unto diviners; but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do. The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet —or, as we might render it, prophets—from the midst of thee, of thy brethren; unto him ye shall hearken. The contrast is between the false divination of the heathen and the true inspired prophecy which Jehovah shall bestow upon Israel.

But, like all the great promises of God to His people, it was soon felt that this one had never received adequate fulfilment. Its ideal and perfection had never been reached. And men threw forward their eyes to a time yet to come,

[1] Jer. 31^{34}. [2] Isa. 54^{13}.

when a perfect prophet would arise. Particularly when, with the destruction of the State, the prophetic body ultimately ceased to exist, the people felt the need of teaching, and longed for a perfect teacher. A Psalmist thus complains: "We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there any among us that knoweth how long."[1] The perplexities and darkness of the times made the need of a prophet felt; and from another point of view also the need of a prophet arose, to turn the people from their iniquity. Hence Malachi in his last words predicts the reappearance of Elijah: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."[2] These were the two lines of expectation of a prophet, and we observe them both represented in the time of our Lord. To the messengers sent from the Pharisees to John, "he denied not, but confessed: I am not the Christ. And they asked him: What then? art thou Elias? And he saith: I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No." It was a universal expectation of the Jewish schools in the days of our Lord that Elias would precede the Messiah in His manifestation. Indeed, they laid much more stress on Elias than on the Messiah Himself,—he was to restore all things.

By far the most splendid prophetic ideal of the Old Testament, however, is the Servant of the Lord in the second half of Isaiah. The Spirit of the Lord is poured out on him; and His word put in his mouth.[3] The Spirit abides on him, the Lord wakeneth his ear, morning by morning.[4] His mouth is a sharp sword, and he himself a polished arrow. He has not merely the word of the Lord in his mouth; he might almost be said to be the

[1] Ps. 74^9. [2] Mal. 4^5. [3] Isa. 42^1 49^1. [4] Isa. 50^4.

word of Jehovah incarnate. Hence he is the light of the Gentiles.[1] The power he wields is no other than the revelation of Jehovah, which he brings forth to the nations; and they walk in his light, and wait for, that is, defer to, rely on, his teaching. The Servant of the Lord is not a prophet with a message for any particular time or circumstances; he does not give particular teaching or predict any particular event. He is the embodiment of the whole revelation of the true God. He is therefore scarcely a person in the view of the prophetic author, he is rather the true Israel personified; or at all events, if a person, he is Israel concentrated, Israel the bearer of Jehovah's revelation, destined to bring forth from within itself true light to the nations. Salvation is of the Jews.

It is the Davidic king that is the great Messianic figure in the Prophets, and even in the Messianic Psalms, though in some of the Psalms other figures also appear. What is strictly called Messianic prophecy all relates to the Davidic king. It is not strange, perhaps, that none of the dynasties of the Northern kingdom contributes anything to the Messianic conception.[2] No Northern monarch is idealised by the prophets, nor is the Northern monarchy ever regarded as extending into the time of final blessedness. Ephraim and Judah remain,—Ephraim shall not vex Judah, nor Judah envy Ephraim; but they appoint unto themselves one head, the Davidic king.

Besides these great figures, there is another that contributes much to the features which are united in the Christian Messiah, namely, he who is called by the general name of the Saint or Holy One,—that is, the idealised individual righteous man. This figure certainly contributes not a little

[1] Isa. 42 and 49.

[2] The only exception that has been suggested is the 45th Psalm,—the king whose nuptials are celebrated in this passage being held by some to be a Northern prince. Others, however, refer the passage either to Solomon or some Judæan king.

to the perfect ideal realised in our Lord. It is particularly the personal character of this figure—his faith in God, his struggles with adversity and death, his hopes of immortality, and the like — that come prominently to the light. He belongs, not to the eschatology of the kingdom, but to that of the individual. Hence it is in the subjective and personal writings that he appears, as in the Psalms and perhaps Job. It is this person who says in Ps. 16: "I have set the Lord ever before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. For Thou wilt not give over my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption." It is he also who speaks in Ps. 40: "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not require. Then said I, Lo, I am come! I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation." But it is uncertain whether it be the same speaker who, in Ps. 22^{22}, when delivered from death, says: "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee. For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from him,"—and who links on the conversion of the world to his own deliverance: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee." The Psalm has very many affinities with Isa. 40 ff., and the person from whose redemption such wide effects follow may be the Servant of the Lord rather than the individual saint.

It is probable that many of those passages which refer to the individual, and speak of immortality, are pretty late. It cannot be doubted that the Exile cut the history of the people in two, the literature before the Exile—at least that relating to the end—having for its subject chiefly the nation as the people of God; while, after the nation was dissolved by the Captivity, and no more a visible unity, the hopes and

aspirations of the individual find fuller expression. Neither can it be doubted that the fate of the nation sank deep into the popular mind, and seemed to men to be the seal set to the prophetic teaching regarding the people's sin. Henceforth the sense of sin in the people's mind was deeper, and it is probable that then that side of the sacrificial act, according to which it was a propitiation for sin, assumed a larger prominence, and that other meaning which it had of a gift for God's acceptance sank proportionally out of view. It was really the calamitous history of the nation that impressed them with a sense of their sinfulness more than the arbitrary ceremonial enactments, with the disabilities they entailed of the ritual law. From all that we can learn from the Scriptures themselves, these ceremonial regulations were little attended to in the pre-Exile period; but they certainly acquired full force after the Restoration.

Finally, in regard to the priest, who in some parts of the New Testament is so imposing a figure, it is surprising that in the Old Testament he appears but little in connection with the final perfection of the people of the Lord, and has not much part in bringing in the final salvation. In the earlier prophecies, the sin of the people is forgiven directly by Jehovah, after His severe judgments have brought home the sense of their sin to the people's mind; the forgiveness is not mediated by sacrificial or priestly intervention. The Old Testament lays down the great general conception that it is Jehovah to whom salvation belongs. If there are instruments or means towards it, He raises them up, or appoints them. He is present in them, if they are persons, such as the Messianic King; and from Him they derive their validity, if they are means. The sacrificial system is left in the Old Testament entirely unexplained, so far as it has any bearing on the future. It was enough that it should teach for the time some general conceptions such as the people could not but learn from it.

It is in Deutero-Isaiah that the great redemptive conceptions, usually connected with priest and sacrifice, receive their fullest expression,—not, however, in connection with the priest, but with the Servant of the Lord. The sinlessness of the priest is realised in him. "He did no wrong, neither was there guile in his mouth."[1] But, in particular, the step is taken—a step of immeasurable magnitude—of translating the sacrificial idea out of the region of animal life, and throwing it into the sphere of human and personal life, and of conscious, voluntary self-sacrifice: "If his soul should make an offering for sin, he should see a seed. The Lord made to fall on him the iniquities of us all." The suffering Servant of the Lord bears the sins of the people, and he bears them voluntarily. It is doubtful, however, if he be regarded as a priest offering himself. But this is of little consequence. It is the things that are of importance, not the category or conception under which we bring them. The munus triplex, as we call it,—the office of prophet, priest, and king,—is a mere matter of classification, under which we bring things essential in the Redeemer of men If we find the things in the Old Testament, we do not mind missing the classification.

The priestly idea, however, is not altogether unrepresented in the circle of Messianic ideas. In the remarkable passage, Zech. 3, it is said: "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, for thou and thy fellows are types: for, behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." Joshua, the high priest of the Restoration, is a type, in his functions of high priest, of the Branch (the Messiah), through whom Jehovah will remove the iniquity of the land. And in another passage (6^{12}) it is said: "Behold the man whose name is The Branch . . . even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he

[1] Isa. 53^{9}.

shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." The clause "he shall be a priest upon his throne" is rendered by many, "there shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." If this be the true rendering, the idea is that the final perfection requires both a king and a priest; and of these Zerubbabel and Joshua were types. But the idea is not yet expressed that the two functions shall be united in one person. The amity between the two is such that they both sit on one throne. This is not a very natural conception, and it has been usual to interpret the expression 'peace between them both' as rather between the two functions. This idea, however, is certainly expressed in another passage, Ps. 110. The two oracles in it are: (1) "Sit on My right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send thy strong sceptre out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." And: (2) "The Lord hath sworn, Thou are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." There are some who think the Psalm later than this passage in Zechariah, partly because the two functions are united in one personage, and partly because they think this idea—seeing, as a rule, prophecy reflects and idealises existing conditions—would not have been expressed till the period in the history of the people when royalty and priesthood were actually united in one individual in the persons of the Maccabean or Asmonean princes. The Psalm, however, is usually assigned to the reign of David. And there was one occasion in particular, when he united the priestly and royal prerogatives, namely, on the bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem, when he sacrificed and ministered before the Lord clad in a linen ephod. The Psalm is either very early—belonging to a time when sacrificing was not yet strictly confined in practice to the priesthood, but could, on occasions, be performed by other high officers, especially by the king—or very late, when the

two great offices were actually historically united in the same person.

There are also, as has been pointed out already, profound Messianic elements in many of the Psalms, such as the 16th, 22nd, and others, all of which furnished conceptions which entered into the perfect idea of the Redeemer of men. For this is just the peculiarity of the Old Testament, that it struck out lofty moral and redemptive ideals in connection with various personages on occasions the most diverse. These lofty ideals were ultimately combined together to make out the Being of Him who was ideal on all sides. But this Messianic of the Old Testament was, so to speak, unconscious. The writers had not the future king in their mind: they were speaking of other characters, or they were uttering presentiments, or what seemed to them religious necessities, or projecting forward brilliant spiritual hopes and anticipations. There was a spirit in them infinitely broader than the mere consciousness or hope of a future person,—a spirit as broad as the kingdom of God in all its needs, in all its endowments, and in all the possible height of its attainments.

The history of the people's mind, from the Restoration onward, is mainly the history of their reflection on these lofty ideals. They tried these ideals by the condition of the present, and found that they and the present were incompatible, and they projected them into the future, and thus the ideals became prophetic. Further, they had received the hope of a great deliverer, and he became a centre around whom the ideals—whether of glory or holiness, or even of suffering—could be gathered, and they attached them to him; and thus things which had originally, in the long course of revelation, been said of many, or at least several, personages, all came to be grouped around one special expected great deliverer.

The only creative book after the rebuilding of the temple is the Book of Daniel. Most modern scholars place the book

in the Maccabean age,—from 170 to 160 B.C.,—at least in its present form, though there may be older elements in it. Just as the horizon of Deutero-Isaiah is bounded by the Exile, so the horizon of Daniel is bounded by the freedom of the people to be achieved against Antiochus, who had profaned the temple and abolished the daily sacrifice. This horizon is the same in all the visions. The Messianic age breaks or dawns immediately on the back of the downfall of this tyrant. The four monarchies are no doubt the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, that of Alexander and his four generals who succeeded him, and the Syro-Greek kingdom of the Seleucids. This is the fourth kingdom, out of which comes the little horn, who in all cases is Antiochus the persecutor. The Messianic prophecy in Daniel has several forms. The most general is that in chap. 2, where the stone, cut out without hands, which grew to a great mountain, and smote the great image of the world-monarchy to pieces, is a symbol of the kingdom of God, which shall overcome all other kingdoms, and itself endure for ever. The most remarkable form which the Messianic hope takes is in chap. $7^{13.\,14}$, where one like a son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and was brought to the Ancient of days, and receives the kingdom, that all peoples should serve him. It is not easy to say whether this son of man be a symbol for Israel, the people of the saints of the Most High, or be the Messiah. It is certain that this phrase was very early interpreted of the Messiah,—it is so already in the Book of Enoch. And unquestionably some new Messianic ideas were suggested by the passage, *e.g.* the pre-existence of the Messiah before His manifestation.

It may suffice to sum up this brief history of Messianic prophecy thus: 1. All redemptive power and grace is exerted by Jehovah,—"salvation belongeth unto the Lord."[1] This is the point of view from which to estimate the Messianic: the

[1] Ps. 3^{8}.

Messiah represents Jehovah in some of His saving operations, —if he is king, Jehovah the true King is present in him; if priest, he operates with means appointed by Jehovah; if servant of the Lord, the servant is truly a divine thing, the creation of Jehovah by His choice and endowment with the Spirit. He is Jehovah's word and truth incarnate.

2. The Messianic is thus as broad as Jehovah's saving operations,—as the persons and means that He employs or inspires,—and varies in different periods; though on the one hand the Messianic king, and on the other the Servant of the Lord, supply the chief conceptions.

3. Finally, after prophetic revelation had, in the main, ceased, a process of synthesis of the scattered elements commenced, and the various conceptions were grouped round about a single person.

CHAPTER XIX.

The various Kinds of Messianic Prophecy.

The question is often asked in regard to passages in the Old Testament, such as, for example, the 2nd Psalm, the 7th and 42nd chapters of Isaiah, To whom is the reference here? And then, in all likelihood, a distinction is drawn between a primary and a secondary reference, between an immediate and a deeper application; and it is said that with the immediate reference to David or other Old Testament personage there must be admitted a further and principal reference to Christ.

Now, when we hear the question put, To whom is the reference in this passage? there immediately occurs to our minds another question, Reference by whom? If a reference implies some one to whom reference is made, it equally implies some person or mind that makes the reference. The question, To whom is the reference made? when stated fully, must be either, To whom is reference made here by the Spirit of Revelation? or, To whom is reference made here by the Israelitish author of the passage? But these questions, though both legitimate enough, are perfectly distinct, and may admit of distinct answers.

The questions are both legitimate. For it cannot be denied that there was a Spirit of Revelation active in Old Testament times in unfolding truth, or that the Hebrew mind must, in order to produce the Old Testament Scriptures, have had relations with God of another kind than the Gentile nations had. But this Spirit of Revelation must

have had more knowledge than the human writer, and wider views; and have comprehended not only the whole scope of any particular truth, but, what was a much profounder thing, the whole scope of the general scheme of which any particular truth was but a fragment. An eye which sees the whole field must estimate any object upon it differently from one which sees that particular object or its immediate surroundings only.

No possible understanding of revelation can be come to, unless some such assumptions as the following be made: First, that revelation, from its earliest beginnings in the Old Testament to its latest statements in the New, is one coherent system of thought; second, that this system gradually grew, and that in the long history of the Hebrew people we can trace it in good part from its germs to its full efflorescence; and, third, that the system did not advance, in a mechanical way, by the Spirit of Revelation injecting into the mind of some writers now an opinion, and then a fact, out of all connection with the writer's experience or his country's life; but that the truth progressed in an organic way, and arose through the forms and occasions of a personal and national life, which both religiously and morally was of the profoundest character.

But if these axioms be true, we may say quite fairly that the meaning or reference in the mind of the Spirit of Revelation was different from that of the Hebrew writer. To the one the whole was in view, the end was seen in the beginning, and the line, longer or shorter, of intermediate development, through which the beginning should rise into the perfect end, was visible in all its extent; while the view of the other was necessarily limited, and though he always spoke or wrote intelligently, and with an earnestness never surpassed by any teacher or moralist in other lands, yet his conception of the truth which he was teaching must have been coloured by the relations amidst which he stood, and by

the nature of his own mind; and his comprehension of the relation of any truth to the whole must have been less or greater according to circumstances, many of which it might be difficult to estimate.

The distinction here drawn will be no less, perhaps to some even more, apparent, if what we have called the Spirit of Revelation be not supposed to be a conscious mind at all, but be regarded as a mere personification, to which the name revelation-spirit might be better applied, and which would be identical with the *idea* of the system in its perfect state which we call revelation. This idea is Christianity. And it is evident that it is from the point of view of this *idea* that the New Testament writers generally speak; and that they throw back the perfection of this idea upon the imperfect and only germinating condition of the system in the Old Testament. Of course they regard the Spirit of Revelation as a person; but they regard Him as having in view the perfect form of a truth in the New Testament, even when giving imperfect indications of it in the Old; and therefore they find in the most rudimentary statement in the Old Testament an expression of the fully developed truth of the new dispensation.

The question, therefore, what was the meaning of the Spirit of Revelation in any particular place, becomes very much what is the form of the truth, taught in that place, in its perfect or highest form? And to answer this question, we must have recourse to the ultimate form of the system of revelation in the New Testament. The whole was always had in view in giving any part. The part was but an instalment, carrying with it a promise of the whole, and an intention both ultimately to give, and meantime to suggest, the whole. And on account of the progressive and germinant character of the revelation there lay in every fragment or germ of a truth a prophecy, for there was in it a determination towards that form which was its perfection or fulfilment.

In using the Old Testament now, especially for purposes of edification, all this ought to be considered as elements of its meaning. For to omit them would be to fall short of giving a true account of the Old Testament, as much as one would fall short of giving a true account of a child who furnished a minute inventory of his stature and organs, and relations to the things about him, but omitted to state that there was a principle of growth in him, and that he manifested a *tendency* to become a man.

It may be asked, seeing the revelation was progressive, and given mediately through the forms and occasions of a personal and national life, must we not consider the fragments and germs of truth in their various shapes, and with the varied colours which different ages lent them, to be what the Spirit of Revelation designed to be at such particular times revealed, and therefore his meaning? Undoubtedly; for the disposition of events out of which the truth arose, and which gave it much of its colour, was never accidental, and the mind of the author was always under the influence of the Spirit. But, seeing the events and circumstances referred to were those that surrounded the author, and helped to determine his mind, and seeing that his mind and tongue were the mould on which at last the truth was formed, the meaning of the Spirit of Revelation thus considered does not differ from the meaning of the Hebrew author.

It is this meaning of the Hebrew author which, in any scientific study of the Old Testament as a progressive unfolding of truth, we are most interested in; and it is in reference to this Hebrew author that we mean to put the question, To whom, in the passages of the Old Testament usually called Messianic, is reference made? Whom has the Hebrew author in his mind in these various passages? It may be supposed that the Hebrew author has not always the same subject in his mind, and that consequently there are various kinds of Messianic prophecies in Scripture.

First, then, there are real Messianic prophecies or statements in the Old Testament, that is, statements made by the Hebrew writers with direct and conscious reference to the Messiah or to something in His kingdom. The term Messiah, as has been already stated, means 'anointed.' As applied to a certain future king for whom at a particular stage in the history of Israel people and prophets began to look, it is taken from the 2nd Psalm:

> "The kings of the earth set themselves,
> And the rulers took counsel together,
> Against the Lord, and against His Anointed."

This Psalm, in the mind of its author, may or may not have had immediate reference to this king; but it is beyond controversy that the prophets did anticipate the advent of a king, who, though of the line of David, was to be possessed of extraordinary endowments.

"It is a fact indisputable and undisputed, that for a long time before the birth at Bethlehem, the Jews were looking out for a prince who was to arise to them from David's house. They were 'waiting for the consolation of Israel.' . . . The expectation of a redeemer and prince had been growing in the hearts of the people ever since the Captivity, and may even be traced back through the preceding centuries as far as the accession of Rehoboam, the fatal era when the hopes of perpetual unity and dominion, which had been cherished during the brilliant reigns of David and Solomon, were so lamentably frustrated by the final disruption of the kingdom. From that time till the cessation of prophecy, a long succession of predictions announced the advent of a son of David, of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end."[1]

In confirmation of the opinion advanced in the above extract, the passage referred to at the end of it needs only to

[1] Binnie, *The Psalms*, p. 158.

be read: "To us a child is born, to us a son is given: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."[1] That the expectation of a special king of the line of David, under whom the kingdom should attain its perfection, existed among the prophets, is 'undisputed.' The only point in dispute is the time and circumstances when the expectation arose. It is certainly not probable that the expectation of any special king existed anterior to the rise of the kingdom. For, by the law of progressive revelation, the external events of history, though they cannot be considered as the measure of prophetic truth (as if prophecy were merely the consciousness of history), may always be regarded as what gave occasion to its being spoken, and the varying Messianic element in the Old Testament is but the ideal and glorified reflection of the varying history and institutions of the people. The anticipation of a perfect king could not arise before there were imperfect kings.

But it is certain, on the other hand, that we find the anticipation in full blossom in the time of Isaiah and his contemporary Micah, and even, if possible, in a manner more pronounced in Zechariah: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; behold thy king cometh unto thee."[2]

In the above extract the expectation is traced as high up as the time of Rehoboam and no further. This date is probably an inference from the fact that the disruption of the kingdom took place under that king. But there is no evidence in the Old Testament itself which would lead us higher up than Isaiah, except evidence which would carry us as high as David himself.

Between the splendid circle of Messianic Psalms, including the 2nd and the 110th, supposed by some to belong to the era of David, and founded at least on Nathan's oracle to him in 2 Sam. 7, and the prophecies just referred to in the

[1] Isa. 9^6. [2] Zech. 9^9.

writers of the Assyrian age, there are no references to a personal Messiah. The great prophets of the north, Elijah and Elisha, have no such doctrine to declare. And, coming to Amos and Hosea, the one a prophet whose calling was exercised in the north, and the other a native of that kingdom, we do not find in their prophecies, though falling within the borders of the Assyrian age, any such specific predictions as occur in Isaiah. They both, indeed, predict the restoration of the house of David to universal authority over the tribes, the one more generally and the other distinctly: "In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and will build it as in the days of old."[1] "Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king."[2]

But though Hosea distinctly predicts the reunion of all the tribes again under the house of David, it is doubtful whether we are entitled to extract from his language any particular views regarding the condition of the Davidic house at the future time referred to. The prophet is very strong in his reprobation of the schism of the north. By him departure from the house of David and returning to it are coupled with departing from Jehovah and returning to Him; and the things are, in his view, almost identical. And when he speaks of returning to David their king, he has in his mind the vacillating conduct of the Northern tribes in the actual history of David, as well as their secession from his house in the person of his grandson; and we cannot be sure that he means more by the language than that they shall reverse their act of rebellion and undo their past history. In the mouth of Jeremiah and Ezekiel the expression 'seek David their king' may have a meaning more particular, because ere their day the great predictions of Isaiah and

[1] Amos 9^{11}. [2] Hos. 3^{5}.

Micah had intervened, and they may employ the older phraseology to cover both the old and more general as well as the new and more precise truth.

It is held by some that the expectation of a special king from David's house may be traced even in the Psalms of the era of David, perhaps in the 2nd, but certainly in the 110th. But the date of the origin of this anticipation, however interesting, is not the point to which we are directing our remarks in the present instance: it is to the fact of this anticipation really existing at some stage or other of the people's history. This fact is 'undisputed.' There are statements in the Old Testament in which the Hebrew author consciously refers to the Messiah.

But now, while this is undisputed, it is quite possible that these prophets or Hebrew writers, though speaking consciously of the Messiah, may not always have described Him and His reign precisely as history has shown them to be. It is quite certain, if Christ was the promised Messiah He claimed to be, that they have not done this. Neither was it to be expected that they should. For there was in their own day such a king and kingdom of God already upon the earth; it had a certain form, and existed in relations which varied considerably in different prophetic ages; and it is no more than may be considered probable that the writer, even when thinking of the future king and kingdom, and knowing perhaps that the king to come would be unlike the king then ruling, and the kingdom different in form from that then existing, may not have been able to describe that king and kingdom altogether truly as they have appeared. He will describe the king rather as if he were to come in the relations in which the prophet himself then lived. Thus Micah, after predicting the advent of the king out of Bethlehem Ephratah, adds, "And this man shall be peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword: thus shall

he deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land."[1]

The form of all prophecy, even the directly Messianic, varied according to the historical conditions of the people when it was uttered. That element of it received prominence which, at any particular time, was of chief significance in the life of the people. And the fact is certain that the form of the Messianic prophecies is of such a kind that the Jewish expositors of the time of our Lord were deceived by them into the belief that the Messiah was to be a temporal prince such as David was, and that the form of the kingdom was to be as it was under the first monarchy. It may be said that the comparison of other prophecies would have corrected their views. That may be true; but it leaves this untouched, that the prophecies on *this* point were of such a kind as, taken by themselves, to suggest a temporal monarchy. And that they not unreasonably did so may be inferred from the fact that, even now, a great many interpreters agree with the Pharisees, and maintain that these prophecies regarding the Messiah and His kingdom have as yet received no fulfilment, but shall be verified in His territorial, visible, earthly reign, when His present rule, which is of another kind and for other purposes, shall be ended.

Now, if on the one hand it be natural that the Old Testament prophets should describe the Messiah and the things of His kingdom in this way, it is surely equally natural on the other that the New Testament should disregard the deviations in form from the reality of history, and recognise the Messiah. It is natural that, when the prophets were looking forward very far, the atmosphere through which they looked should in some measure distort the object seen. No doubt this could have been obviated by revelation, but perhaps not without making revelation a thing entirely immediate. And it is natural, on the other hand, to

[1] Mic. $5^{5f.}$.

accept at once this somewhat distorted object as the Messiah. When one sees himself or another in a convex mirror, it is not a true likeness that is presented. Some features may be exaggerated and some diminished, parts may be obliterated altogether, and a general disproportion introduced; still one does not deny the reflection to be that of one's self. Neither will a fair criticism refuse to admit that an Old Testament writer may have had the Messiah in his mind, even in cases when the description does not quite square with the Messiah's history, as it has actually occurred. It certainly does afford some ground for the strong language that has been applied to modern criticism, when it refuses to admit that the writers may have been thinking of the Messiah when their description does not quite agree with His actual history; as for example, when de Wette refuses to consider Ps. 2 directly Messianic because it paints the Messiah as a warrior breaking the nations with a rod of iron. This objection of de Wette's is invalid in two ways: the Psalm might be directly Messianic, even though it spoke of this king as if he were a king like David himself, who had to fight for his throne; and the warlike terms in which he is spoken of form no obstacle to a Christian writer applying them to Christ. The author of the Apocalypse speaks of the man-child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. All that incongruities of description prove, therefore, is that the writer, though referring in his own mind to the coming king, was not enabled in all respects to conceive Him as He came, but conceived Him as if He had come perhaps in relations like or liker those of his own time.

Second, Besides these real or direct Messianic prophecies, there are certain other passages in the Old Testament where the writer does not seem to be consciously speaking of anything future, but of things and persons then existing; while the New Testament applies the passages to the Messiah, and affirms that they were spoken of Him, not merely that they

are applicable to Him. These are generally called typically Messianic prophecies. Perhaps a name more intelligible would be *ideally* Messianic, or even *ideally* typical, as there may be another kind of typical, which may be named ordinary or simple.

If we were to form a general conception of salvation, we should define it to be the union of God and man. This is salvation, and the means to this is the way of salvation. Now, if man's condition be considered, something really divine must lay hold of him to deliver him. There will be, as in every man saved, so in this people of salvation, two elements, a human and a divine. The divine will be a series of energies exerted on the human; and the latter will be a series of relations sustained to the divine. For example, men being ignorant of God's will, there must be some divine energy of revelation or prophecy; men being far from God, there must be some energy of atonement or priesthood to bring them nigh. And, on the other hand, the consequence of this influence from above on man will be that he will enter into certain relations with God, he will become the *just*, or the *servant*, or the *sufferer*, and such like. There will be a whole circle of offices to be filled, and of *rôles* to be played or characters sustained. These will be essential among the salvation people.

And without question Israel, as chosen in Abraham and redeemed from Egypt, was the subject of all these divine influences, and sustained all these characters. Moses prayed: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets!" Jehovah said to the people, defining their relations to Himself and to the world: "Ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." In Isa. 40–66 Israel appears with all these determinations upon it. But the nation as a whole was unable for these high functions. It was too feeble to be king among the nations. It was too ignorant to be prophet to the peoples. It was too sinful to be priest of mankind.

But that endowment of Israel which was prophetic, that determination of the nation towards prophecy, condensed itself and appeared in the prophetic order. And the same took place with respect to the priestly determination. And in like manner that requirement that it should be servant was fulfilled in one class in Israel, the true theocratic kernel. And that destiny that the righteous shall suffer, that through tribulation the entrance lies to glory, was exhibited in the case of the pious,—particularly the pious king, such as David; the true prophet, such as Jeremiah; and the godly exiles in Babylon.

Now, it is evident that all these offices were filled, and all these characters sustained, in the Hebrew State or kingdom of God. But it is also evident that they never were perfectly filled or fully sustained. The office was after all still nearly empty, and the character was merely sketched. But it not seldom happened that writers spoke of the offices and characters not as they were actually filled and sustained in any case, or ever throughout the history, but according to the *idea* of them, giving expression, say in the 72nd Psalm, to the hope that Solomon the theocratic king would be perfectly just and his dominion universal, the *idea* of the theocratic king and kingdom being justice and universality. Thus whole series of passages are found, where the persons and things which then were, are described, yet not as they actually were at any time, but according to the *idea* in them. And these *ideal* descriptions, which are, of course, true descriptions of the theocratic things, king, kingdom, just man, servant of God, sufferer in an evil world, if they were truly realised, are in the New Testament transferred to Him who did perfectly realise in Himself the King of the kingdom of God, the Just One, the Servant of the Lord, Sufferer, and such like. They are applicable to Him, and only to Him truly; and they were meant to be applied to Him by that higher wisdom which was all

the while raising these perfect thoughts of things only perfect in Him, and thus suggesting Him and preparing for Him in the hearts of men of *those* days, and preparing for us also in these days, accurate delineations of Him.

Now, it cannot be considered unnatural that prophets should so conceive things in Israel and so speak of them. If a prophet once received the idea of a kingdom of God, and a king for God being His representative, as He said, "I have set My king on My holy hill of Zion," and as it is said of Solomon that he sat down on God's throne in Jerusalem, it naturally follows that he should conceive God's king as being just, as He Himself is just; and of His kingdom as ruling over all, as God's kingdom does. Neither can it be considered unnatural if what is thus said should be applied to Christ, who filled the same office, and who alone filled it according to this ideal delineation, since this ideal description was actually given with the intention of suggesting Him, though the writer may not consciously have referred to Him.

Some *organic* connection must subsist between Christ and the men holding such offices and exhibiting such characters, in order that what is said of them may be fairly transferred to Him. The offices must be the same, and also the characters and relations sustained. If what is said of Solomon the king ideally, *i.e.* not according to the way in which Solomon realised the idea of kinghood, but according to the idea of kinghood itself, is to be transferred to Christ the perfect King, of course they must be kings of the same kind. One cannot say that Solomon was king of a State, and Christ of a Church. They were both kings of the same kingdom of God, though it may have altered its form.

Similarly, if the priest be described ideally and the description be transferred to Christ, Aaron and Christ must be both priests in the same temple; and, in fact, it is not

easy to conceive of priesthood in any other temple or sphere. And all this will hold of the prophet, of the righteous servant, of the extreme sufferer. Now, did not Christ fulfil perfectly all these offices of prophet, priest, and king, and these characters of son, servant, sufferer? Or, if one dislikes such technical words as 'office of a prophet,' let the names go; the things remain. Did He not know God and His will, and declare it to men in fulness? and was He not sent to declare it? or, if that term be thought too technical, did He not feel under strong pressure and obligation to declare it? Was He not the perfect servant,—able to say truly, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do"? And therefore it is not mere accommodation when the New Testament applies those ideal delineations of the Old Testament to Him. There was an identity of Christ with all these offices and characters, an organic connection between Him and all this. This organic connection was twofold,—first, according to the flesh, so He was Israel, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David; and, second, according to the Spirit,—to the various ramifications and exhibitions of the divine endowment; as it was said, "I have put My Spirit in Him."

This ideal theocratic is the most common of all the prophecies of the Messianic in the Old Testament, especially of the poetical prophecies, and it is in many cases difficult to distinguish it from the *real* Messianic; and it is not often of great importance to be able. It requires that the writer should conceive the *idea* of that thing or person, office or character, of which he is speaking, and speak according to this idea. Writers on typology and expositors sometimes describe this by saying "that the writer is lifted above himself, and speaks in terms which, although they may perhaps admit of being applied to himself, are more easily and naturally applicable to our Lord."[1] Some-

[1] Binnie, *The Psalms*, p. 182.

times with less accuracy it is said that "in the character in which he speaks, he so exactly prefigured Christ, that the whole is applicable to Christ as truly as to himself; and in some parts he is moved by the Holy Spirit to utter words which, though true of himself, were much more perfectly fulfilled in Christ."[1] Or that, "being a prophet, and therefore a type of Christ, he is led to use *unconsciously* words which in their highest and truest sense are applicable only to Christ";[2] — the 'unconsciously' here is doubtful. The prophet spoke consciously enough, though the Messiah was not in his mind. Sometimes, again, it is said "with the immediate reference to David and Solomon, there must be admitted a further and principal and conscious reference to Christ."[3] Sometimes it is said that the author wrote in the light of the end, and spoke of himself, or of the king and kingdom, in the light of Christianity.

All these seem to me but ways of saying that the author spoke ideally, that he spoke of himself and his times, and the characters and offices about him, not as they ever were, but according to the truth they represented. Sometimes it is said, conversely, that he spoke of the Messiah under the figure, or saw Him through the veil, of some type. All these modes of speaking can be resolved into one or other of these two: either the writers spoke consciously of the coming king and his kingdom, though they may have spoken of them in a form corresponding to the king and his relations in their own time; or they spoke of the king of their own day, though they may have spoken of him according to the true conception of him, and thus in a way only realised in the Messiah.

The former way of speaking, namely, of the Messiah consciously, but with the conception of Him and His relations more or less as the king and kingdom were in the prophet's

[1] Binnie, *The Psalms*, p. 182.
[2] Perowne, *Psalms*, p. 54.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 173.

own day, is sometimes described as 'borrowing imagery'[1] from the Jewish dispensation, or from the reign of David and Solomon. Such an expression is apt to mislead one into the idea that the writers were not serious in their descriptions, but used language regarding the future which they knew to be false. Now, this may sometimes have been the case, but it is never to be assumed, unless it be certain. The prophets were as earnest in their conceptions and delineations of the future, as men now are in their conceptions of heaven, though these may be in some degree untrue.

There can be no doubt that the prophets, especially towards the end of the Hebrew commonwealth, do at times manifest the consciousness that the future kingdom of God, besides possessing the attributes of perfect righteousness and universality, would differ from the present in some respects even in form. But, in general, the future is but the perfection of the present; and where the prophets 'borrow imagery,' that is, where they express the future in the form of their own present, it is to be assumed that, apart from the poetry of their delineations, they mean literally what they say. How far what they say shall be fulfilled literally is another question, and one to be sedulously kept distinct; for the Hebrew prophets will never come to their rights, nor be recognised as the men of power and individuality that they were, unless we carefully distinguish between *prophecy*—that is, what the prophets themselves in their own day and circumstances meant—and *fulfilment*, that is, the shape in which the principles of the kingdom of God which they enunciated will eventually, amidst the enormous changes that have passed over the form of that kingdom and of the world, find their final realisation.

Besides this great mass of prophecies, which, being ideally theocratic, are properly Messianic, there may be

[1] Binnie, *The Psalms*, p. 188.

some others which might well be called *ordinarily* theocratic. These would be prophecies in which the typical person is spoken of just as he was, and not according to the idea of his office and person, and which are nevertheless applied in the New Testament to the Messiah and His kingdom. It is quite natural that some things or persons in the Old Testament economy should have realised the true idea in the kingdom of God which they expressed, and which therefore could be described in language which equally well fitted the things in the New Testament. But if the Old Testament delineation implied any imperfection in the idea, then it could not be transferred to the New Testament embodiment.

There is a very interesting class of passages from the Old Testament applied to Christ in the New, in which the application is to be explained on the ideal principle, but with certain necessary modifications. These are passages generally of considerable length; and sometimes one expression is transferred to Christ, while, alongside of it, there are others manifestly not at all applicable to Him. In the 40th Psalm, for instance, there occurs a passage, the Septuagint version of which is quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith: Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of the Book it is written of me,) to do Thy will, O God." Now, these words are quoted as having found their highest realisation when spoken by our Lord; yet they are followed by other words in the Psalm which, in their plain grammatical sense, cannot possibly be considered as spoken by Him. For they are a sad confession of sinfulness and misery: "Mine iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I cannot look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head." Several un-

satisfactory explanations of such passages have been given. Some have taken them as throughout directly Messianic; and the confession of sin they consider as made by the Messiah, who is our representative, in our room. But this is a precarious method of interpretation; and, though it is as old as Augustine,[1] it is certainly false. No example occurs in the New Testament of our Lord making use of any such passages or adopting their thoughts as His own.

Another theory has found the explanation of this peculiarity—that some parts in a Psalm are applicable to Christ, and some only to the Psalmist—in the mystical union of Christ and the believer, according to which some things only are applicable to the head, and some only to the members, and some to both. This conception of a mystical union is rather an idea of the New Testament than of the Old. In the Old Testament, the Messiah is the concentration of the people; in the New, the people are the extension of the Messiah. In the Old, He had not come; the Church was pregnant with Him, ready to bring forth the man child; in the New, He is the firstborn, the head of all. In the Old, types and king and kingdom precede Him and determine towards Him; in the New, they arise out of Him. And consequently this explanation of the mystical union is not quite accurate according to Old Testament modes of representation.

These Psalms do not apply some parts to the writer, and some to Christ, because the writer is contained in Christ; but because, though the one occupied the same office as the other, He was not exhausted in His office, but was more than it. If the same things be said of

[1] "He made our offences His offences that He might make His righteousness our righteousness. Why should not He who took upon Him the likeness of the sinner's flesh, take upon Him also the likeness of the sinner's voice?"—Quoted by Binnie, *The Psalms*, p. 193.

Christ and the Old Testament saints, it is not because Christ is one with them, but because He is one of them. All such Psalms are typical Psalms, that is, are said directly of the Old Testament person; but some things are said really, and some ideally, or some things are said of him in aspects in which he is not typical, that is, does not stand in any office, or play any *rôle*, essential to the kingdom. Surely David, though a type, was not typical in all that he did or was. It may be no easy matter, either *a priori* or as the result of induction, to reach principles which shall enable us to say within what sphere alone the types were typical, but certainly they were not so in all their relations; and this explains why, though they be types, some things said of them may have no significance in typology, although standing beside other things which have a typological meaning.

There are certain other very interesting passages applied to Christ in the New Testament, which may also be called typical,—the type, however, not being an official in this case, but a member of the theocracy, a *saint*. These passages are said of believers, and are realised in Christ as the Author and Finisher of the faith, and then, in the Messianic kingdom, are realised in the general body of saints. Specimens of this class of passages are Ps. 16 and Ps. 8. In Ps. 16 the speaker assures himself of immortality and everlasting life to his whole nature from his relation to God, because he is a covenant member of the theocracy. But the theocratic blessedness is realised only in the Messiah. Nay further, he who is Saviour (מוֹשִׁיעַ) to the mass, must be himself first saved (נוֹשָׁע) of God. The Messiah goes through that which the saint anticipates for himself, and causes it thus to be realised in the ordinary saint. Of this the 8th Psalm is an illustration. Jehovah has "crowned man with glory and honour, and put all things under his feet." But all Jehovah's designs find realisation only in the Messianic kingdom. Hence the Psalm becomes a prophecy of Messianic man—man in the

Messianic kingdom, the perfection of which has not yet come in. But further, this glory of man, as a whole, in the Messianic kingdom has to be realised, first of all, in the Messiah Himself: "We see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour."[1] And, of course, all rise at last to that to which He has risen.

From what has been said, we see that a general classification of Messianic passages, so far as the mind of the writer is concerned, might be the following:

First, there are real or *directly Messianic* passages, in giving expression to which the writer really had in his own mind that future King or something in His kingdom, or that future Person distinct from others of the class to which He belonged. In this case (1) the description given by the writer may correspond almost exactly with the historical relations and circumstances of the Messiah. (2) More frequently the description has in it many of the elements of that form or condition of the kingdom which existed in the time of the writer, and which, not unnaturally, he transferred into the future, which he always felt to be close at hand.

Second, there are typical or *indirectly Messianic* passages, in giving expression to which the writer had not in his mind the future King or Person Himself, but some present king of the theocracy or kingdom of God of his own time, or some person who, in this preparatory kingdom of God, corresponded in his place or character to the Messiah in the perfect kingdom. But in these passages (1) this actual king or this person, contemporary with the author (who is often the author himself) and his relations, are not spoken of as they actually were, but ideally, or according to the true conceptions of the theocratic king, kingdom, etc., and their relations. Hence such passages may be called *ideally Messianic*. These descriptions are often prayers; as for example Ps. 72. These passages will often be found to correspond almost

[1] Heb. $2^{8f.}$.

exactly to the king, saint, etc., in the perfect form of the kingdom of God, which is Christianity. (2) Other passages may be of such a kind as to be called *ordinarily Messianic*, because what is said in them may not exceed the possibilities of the Old Testament person or thing or relation, and thus be applicable both to Old and New. (3) There are other passages where only part of the description can be transferred to the New Testament person corresponding to the person spoken of in the Old. These are therefore called *partially Messianic;* and the explanation of their occurrence is, that though the Old Testament person corresponded in general to the person in the New, there were also other elements in his character real enough as belonging to him, but which would have been imperfections or irrelevancies in the kingdom of God, so that there were no features answering to them in the perfect condition of that kingdom. The parts not transferable are said of the Old Testament person, not as type, but simply as person.

CHAPTER XX.

The Messianic King.

The king of God's kingdom is the Davidic king, or son of David. The first explicit intimation of this truth was given towards the middle of David's reign, just after the king had proposed to build an house for Jehovah. The prophet Nathan at first approved of the royal project; but, the very night after he had given his assent, the word of the Lord came to him, and he was ordered to instruct the king not to go on with his scheme, but was at the same time authorised to promise David that Jehovah would build his house. This most instructive passage runs as follows: "Also the Lord telleth thee that He will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be My son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."[1] This prophecy is really the foundation of all subsequent Messianic prophecy, whether in the Prophets or in the Psalms.

Now, from a reading of this prophecy several things are

[1] 2 Sam. 7[11ff.].

at once evident: *First*, the promises are made not to David, but to his seed after him which shall proceed out of his bowels. And it is to his seed, not strictly to his son, that they are made. Here, seed is not to be interpreted of one individual, but of a line of individuals. The first of these individuals making up the seed was Solomon; but the things said pertain to the whole family of Davidic kings, not, however, to all the members of David's house, but only to such of them as filled the throne. *Second*, the thing promised to this seed is that God shall be his father, and he shall be God's son. And the thing threatened to this seed is that if they sin, God will chasten them with the rod of men; although, even should they sin, His mercy would not depart from them, as it did from Saul; for the house of David and his kingdom should be established for ever. But this contingency here provided for of the seed's sinning and the chastisement determined, indicates that the seed, though son of God, and never to be wholly cut off, is yet the general royal family of David.

It might, no doubt, be argued that all the suffixed pronouns refer not to seed in general, but to that one individual, namely, Solomon, who was David's seed immediately. And this reference might suit some expressions better, *e.g.* "he shall build an house for My name." Should this interpretation be preferred, the general sense still remains the same. Solomon is then conceived of as an individual, no doubt, but as the fountain of a continuous stream of kings. *Third*, the expresssion, "thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever," and others in the passage, imply perpetual connection of the house of David with the kingdom of God. As long as God's kingdom endures, the house of David shall rule over it; the two are from this time inseparably bound together.

This was the extraordinary prediction now made. And we are not to go about minimising the contents of it, saying

that 'for ever' means a long time, and that the promise means no more than that David's line should enjoy possession of the throne of Israel for many generations. For, in the first place, this was a prediction; its genuineness is beyond controversy. And, second, we shall never have done saying that the throne of Israel was the throne of God's kingdom, and that the continuance of this kingdom does not depend upon the outward form of it. And that this promise took an extraordinary hold of the imagination of David himself, appears from his words, when an aged saint and near his end. In 2 Sam. 23 we read:

"Now these be the last words of David.
The Spirit of the Lord spake by me,
And His word was on my tongue.
The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me:
A ruler over men, a just one,
Ruling in the fear of the Lord;
As when the morning breaketh and the sun riseth,
A morning without clouds;
The tender grass springeth out of the earth,
From the clear shining after rain.
Surely such is my house with God!
For He hath made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all things, and sure:
For all my salvation, and all my desire,
Surely He will make to spring up."

What David feels is this: that there should yet be realised in his house "a ruler over men, a just one, ruling in the fear of the Lord"; that as the sun caused the grass to shoot forth on the sultry morning after rain, so Jehovah's fostering grace would yet bring forth this king out of his house; and the pledge of this was the eternal covenant of Jehovah with him, a covenant ordered in all things, and sure.

This faith of the inseparable connection of the house of David with the throne of the kingdom of God is common to all the prophets. Amos says: "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen down . . . and I will raise up his ruins, and will build it as in the days of old";[1] So also Hosea: "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, in the latter days."[2] But by far the most remarkable predictions regarding the house of David occur in the two contemporary prophets, Isaiah and Micah. The prophecy of Isaiah is given in three forms: chap. 7, the prophecy of Immanuel; chap. 9, the prophecy of the Child born, whose name is the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God; and that in chap. 11 of the shoot out of the stem of Jesse, and the branch from his roots. It is probable that all these prophecies belong either to the time of the Syro-Ephraimitish war or to the early Assyrian period; and it is remarkable that the prophet does not recur to the Messianic hope in chaps. 29–33 that seem to belong to the latest period of his prophetic career. The passages chaps. 9 and 11 are admitted by all interpreters to be Messianic, but chap. 7 is denied by very many to have any Messianic reference.

The historical circumstances of the prophecy were these: In the days of Ahaz, Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, formed an alliance, and made war on Judah. The object of the allies was probably to compel Judah to enter into a great confederacy, having for its object to stem the advancing tide of the Assyrian power. The king of Judah had refused to listen to the overtures made to him, and the Northern allies had therefore resolved to dethrone the Davidic house in the person of Ahaz, and set upon the throne a tool of their own, a Syrian called the son of Tabeel. "And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim; and his heart was

[1] Amos 9^{11}. [2] Hos. 3^{5}.

moved, and the hearts of his people, as the trees are moved with the wind." [1]

Isaiah's interview with the king seems to have taken place after the Northern allies had administered a severe defeat to the army of Ahaz, and, after effecting a junction a second time, were on their march to attack the capital. The king had gone outside the walls to inspect the defences, or perhaps to cut off supplies of water from the besiegers. Isaiah was directed to meet him, taking with him his son, Shear-jashub—'Remnant-shall-return.' There was a promise to Ahaz in this child's very presence. But besides this silent promise, Isaiah made him a distinct verbal one: "It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass."

Perhaps even while the prophet was speaking to the cold and reluctant king, he detected signs of incredulity in him; so silently and with such want of emotion were his words received, that he could detect the secret resolve of Ahaz already formed, not to trust to Jehovah's help alone, but to call to his aid the king of Assyria. Hence the prophet declares: "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." Probably the king gave no response to these assurances. Without deep religion himself, he was incredulous and alarmed. The prophet, to remove his fear and incredulity, offered the corroboration of any sign he might ask: "Ask a sign of the Lord thy God." Ahaz rejected this offer also, being either too cold to enter into the prophet's enthusiasm, or too sceptical to put much faith in supernatural help. He therefore put aside the offer of supernatural assurance by saying that it was unnecessary, and that the word of God was sufficient; but all the while he was resolved, as soon as the prophet left him, to call in the arm of Assyria.

Now, here in this conjunction of circumstances we have the elements out of which the extraordinary prediction of Immanuel arose. The elements are these:

[1] Isa. 7^2.

1. The Northern alliance of Syria and Ephraim, and their declared resolution, which was to depose the house of David and set up a new dynasty in Jerusalem, even the son of Tabeel. This Northern confederacy was of overwhelming power, so far as mere material strength was concerned. Ahaz could do little to resist it, and had already been defeated before it. And its purpose was a root and branch destruction of the independence of the Southern kingdom, and the deposition of the royal house.

Here, now, were the conditions and the instruments of fulfilling that which Isaiah had long foreseen as principles that must be fulfilled. The condition of Israel was such that he knew the theocracy must be dissolved, in order to found a purer kingdom. Now this dissolution was at hand. Assyria was the rod of Jehovah's anger. The prophet in a moment adjusted himself to the elements of the world around him, and disposed them all in their places. But these external movements in the world, although on the grandest scale, were but embodiments of principles, which the prophet had held long before the movements took place.

2. The second point of importance was the invocation by the king of the aid of Assyria, and the intervention of the great world-empire in the affairs of Israel. The people of God and the world-power were now confronted. The very crisis which the prophet had long foreseen to be inevitable was now actually in progress. The outlines of his first vision—the desolation of his country, and the ultimate preservation of only a remnant—were going to be filled up. Ahaz's hope that the Assyrian would deliver him from Syria and Ephraim might be realised, for that was Jehovah's purpose; but, while giving temporary deliverance, he would prove the rod of Jehovah's anger, and bring ruin upon Judah. Yet the ruin would not be final; the stock of the tree cut down would remain, and send forth a new growth.

3. But another thing must be noted, namely, the peculi-

arity of prophecy, which compresses great momenta into a brief space, which brings up great movements close upon the back of one another, and takes them all in at one glance of the eye. This peculiarity some writers on prophecy have called its perspective, or, to use an expression of Delitzsch's, the foreshortening of the prophet's horizon. Just as a traveller, at a distance from a mountainous region, sees one mountain rise up behind another, and fancies it close at the back of the nearer, but when he reaches the nearer, finds that the one which seemed so close behind it has receded, and really stands far away; so, in the prophetic view, great events crowd up close behind one another, which, however, in actual fulfilment are widely apart in time.

The term 'perspective' applied to this peculiarity of prophecy is a description of the phenomenon, but is unhappily no explanation of it. The explanation is usually found in the prophetic vision. But vision in the strict sense was rare; and if we look into our Lord's prophecy of the end, we observe the same peculiarity, the two great events which He has in view—the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world—seem immediately combined; immediately after the tribulation of these days shall the sun be darkened. Perhaps, though we cannot assume anything like strict vision, there may have been a powerful exercise of the intuitional faculty, which presented the events together, taking little note of time, or contracting the time into what seemed a period of a very few years.

However we explain it, we observe the operation of this peculiarity in the prophet's representation. He clothes his great ideas in events, and these events are immediately present, or in immediate proximity. The Lord's work is short. The consummation is determined. The actors in the drama are already on the stage,—Jehovah and His people and the world-power. These are not forces, but absolute forces. They are the embodiment of universal conceptions. Their

meeting is the signal for the final conflict; and when the conflict subsides, the dawn of peace breaks eternal behind it. The darkness of the Assyrian invasion, the sudden breaking of the light, the endless duration of the reign of the Prince of peace, follow one another like rapidly shifting scenes. "They shall pass through the land, hardly bestead and hungry. And it shall come to pass, that they shall look unto the earth; and behold distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish, and thick darkness driven away. For there shall not be gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time He brought low the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time hath He made it glorious,—the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. . . . For all the armour of the armed men, and garments rolled in blood, shall be for burning, for fuel of fire. For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; and his name shall be called the Wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David." The Northern regions, first and most cruelly desolated by the Assyrian, are the first to experience the deliverance, or at least they feel the joy of it most keenly,—"they joy before Thee as men joy in harvest." And the Messiah's kingdom is established on the ruins left by the Assyrian.

The prophet's description might appear to us nothing but a political deliverance. "The yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, Thou hast broken as in the day of Midian." Now, of course, it must be admitted that neither Isaiah nor any of the prophets had yet attained to the idea of a people of God, which was not a people in the natural sense, that is, a nation among other nations with a country, and possessing national independence. This idea continued to be cherished at all times. Even the disciples shortly before our Lord's ascension put the question

to Him, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?" But the deliverance was not merely political. Jehovah was the people's Lawgiver; He was their Judge and their King. And in the restored kingdom of God He was present in the Messianic king, who was called the Mighty God.

But to return to chap. 7. When the king rejected the offer of a sign, the prophet replied, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign; Behold, the virgin (הָעַלְמָה) shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, God-with-us, or, God-is-with-us. Milk and honey shall he eat, by the time he knows to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child knows to refuse evil, and choose good, the land shall be desolate, before whose two kings thou fearest. The Lord is bringing on thee, and on thy father's house, days that have not been from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria. . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that milk and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land,"—that is, the country shall be reduced from an agricultural to a pastoral condition. And a catastrophe shall befall the house of David comparable only to that great humiliation which rent away from it the ten tribes. Yet behind this there shall one rise out of that house, who is Immanuel—God-is-with-us.

Now, many explanations have been given of the passage, which is full of difficulties, partly because it is very condensed, and perhaps gives but a mere outline of what occupied a much larger space, when spoken orally. We must, however, keep in view these general principles, namely, the purpose of the Northern coalition to set aside the Davidic house; and, secondly, the approaching collision between the great Assyrian power and the small kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and the light which this threw to the prophet upon the purposes of Jehovah, and the illumination it cast upon what he had long, on moral grounds, seen to

be inevitable, the destruction of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah,—a work for which the instrument was now at hand. Finally, we must also take into account the peculiarity of prophetic representation, the tendency to operate, if I can say so, with principles, with absolute conceptions, such as the true Jehovah religion on the one hand and the false religion of the idols on the other, the kingdom of the Lord on the one side and its foes on the other, and to throw these absolute religious conceptions into the actual events of the present, to see the conceptions embodied and verified in the events, and to present them as coming into conflict in the immediate or near future.

If, therefore, we take into account these principles and this peculiarity of prophecy which is a peculiarity belonging to prophecy, however we may explain it, we do get an explanation of the prophet's words. He says to Ahaz, "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign." The sign is not one which Ahaz would have liked. The prophet's thoughts take a wider range. He casts his eye forward over the whole destiny of the kingdom of Jehovah. He draws out the programme of his own great conceptions. The sign is mainly the embodiment of his general teaching. It contains two elements,—first, the great judgment which shall sweep over the whole of the people of Jehovah, North and South. "The Lord will bring upon thee days that have not been since Ephraim separated from Judah. Milk and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land." The country shall be reduced to mere pasture-land, a walk for sheep and cattle, and a hunting-ground, where it is not impenetrable forest. This shall be the condition of North and South alike. But the second element is that which the prophet sees rising up behind this,—the salvation. "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, God-is-with-us."

Now the complete parallelism of this line of thought

with the prophecy in chap. 9 of 'the child born, and son given,' makes it most probable that the Immanuel of this chapter is identical with the child of chap. 9, who is admitted, on all hands, to be the Messiah of the house of David. In fact, the abrupt way in which the child is introduced in chap. 9 as one well known, seems to imply that he had been already referred to by the prophet; and such a reference could only be to this passage in chap. 7. The name Immanuel, God-is-with-us, is at least significant as a name. Behind the Assyrian desolation there rises, out of the ruins, the kingdom of Jehovah. The Lord hath founded Zion; and in it the poor of His people will find refuge. Immanuel is a sign, at any rate, of ultimate salvation. The name has no reference to the Northern coalition. It is never brought into relation with Syria and Ephraim, like Maher-shalal-hash-baz in chap. 8^{1-4}; but it is brought into relation with Assyria. "The spreading out of his wings"—*i.e.* the Assyrian armies coming like an inundation—"shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel."

Another exposition of the prophecy is this: The virgin, and Immanuel her child, are hypothetical persons, suppositions. The prophet says to the king: Thou refusest to ask a sign; then the Lord Himself will give thee one. Behold, the young woman, any one,—she who is not a girl but a young adult woman,—will conceive, and bear a son, whom she will name 'God-is-with-us'; and the two kings, before whom thou fearest, shall then have come to destruction as the Lord has said. By the time the child can distinguish between good and evil, he will live on milk and honey, and all left in the land will live on milk and honey, for the Assyrian and the Egyptian will make the land their battle-ground, and devastate it. According to this interpretation, the sign is merely a promise cast into a figurative form; the virgin and Immanuel are mere concrete expressions of the idea, and the idea is entirely one of time, of the

periods that shall intervene till the promise is fulfilled. The time is at hand. She, who is not a child that has to grow up, but is already grown up, and who may be the mother of a son in a year, shall call her child, in token of deliverance from Syria, God-is-with-us. And in two or three years more, the child and all left in the land shall eat milk and honey, because the land shall be desolate, and no longer cultivated. The prophet might just as well have cast his prophecy into terms drawn from the vegetable world, as into terms borrowed from human life; he might have said: Behold the fig tree, it will blossom and bring forth fruit; then men will say, 'God is with us'—the fruit will fall off, and the tree wither, and by that time the Assyrians shall be in the land.

This interpretation, though it happily disposes of the difficulty of the Almah, is less successful in removing our doubts in regard to Immanuel. And of course it seems to fail of doing justice to the New Testament. In regard to the last named difficulty, those who interpret the passage in this way would probably argue as follows. They would say: We must always distinguish between the things which New Testament writers affirm, and corroborate by Old Testament passages, and the proofs or corroborations which they adduce. The things which they assert we take on their authority; but the kind of proofs they bring forward for them from the Old Testament, however valid they may have seemed to those to whom they were addressed, and however well they served as evidence then, may not appear so conclusive to us. But this is of less consequence, because these Old Testament passages are never the primary evidence, they are only corroborations. We, for example, believe in the resurrection of our Lord, because there is historical evidence for it; the argument of the Apostle Peter, based on the 16th Psalm, is not the main evidence, it is at best confirmative. And in like manner we believe in the birth of our Lord from a virgin, because a historian

narrates it, who declares that he had perfect knowledge of all things from the first. The things which we believe are not dependent on a mere method of exegesis of certain Old Testament passages; they are supported by evidence valid in itself. And the method of exposition referred to had its uses in its day, though in some respects it has yielded to another method now. Perhaps it might be added that the Septuagint translation of עַלְמָה by *παρθένος* may be considered in some sense providential. It led men to anticipate the truth, or it made the truth, when revealed, more readily credible. Such, I believe, would be the line of argument pursued. And it is, no doubt, a happy thing that for all the great truths which we believe, we have historical evidence of a kind which we can trust, apart from all inferences made from the Old Testament or corroborations derived from prophecy. At the same time, when we consider that Christianity is the issue of the prior Old Testament period, it is not improbable, it is rather to be expected, that hints should have been given even of its greatest mysteries.

Apart from the New Testament, the interpretation referred to is scarcely worthy of the circumstances. The whole chapter refers to the house of David. It is that house which is invited to ask a sign, and it is to it that the sign is given. The sign seems to concern it; and, indeed, at the moment its existence was at stake, and we naturally expect, therefore, that the sign given will have particular reference to it. Now, the two points in regard to the house of David, to which the prophecy attaches itself, are these: (1) It was threatened with extinction; the promise is made that one, who is to be called God-is-with-us, shall come out of it. (2) The house of David was degenerate in Ahaz, and unbelieving, with no faith in Jehovah. In opposition to this state of things, a true king, whose name shall be God-is-with-us, shall arise out of that now degenerate house.

Again, the extraordinary offer made by the prophet to the king, "Ask a sign; ask it in the depth beneath, or ask it in the heaven above," indicates that Isaiah was prepared to give Ahaz something miraculous, something similar to that sign given to Hezekiah, when the shadow went back on the dial ten degrees. Once more, the passionateness with which Isaiah turns upon the king, when he put away his offer, "Hear now, O house of David, is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign,"—leads us to expect something extraordinary, something bearing on the final destinies of Israel and the house of David. No doubt there is a certain threat in the words, for Immanuel shall appear when the country has been reduced to a desolation. In this the sign resembles the prediction of the child in chap. 9. And, finally, in chap. 8^7 it is said: "Behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and mighty, even the king of Assyria. . . . And he shall pass through Judah . . . and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel." This reference seems inconsistent with the idea that Immanuel is anybody born at a particular time. The land of Judah is called his land. This would suggest that he is king of the country, and identical with the child born in chap. 9, who sits on the throne of David.

We now come to the interpretation, which regards Immanuel as the Messianic king, him who is referred to in chap. 9 as the child born, and in chap. 11 as ruling in the strength of the Spirit of the Lord. This interpretation gives a fuller sense to the name Immanuel; and it connects him with the house of David, to which the sign was given. The sign given to the house of David, so far as it is a promise, is that one shall come out of it, who shall be God-with-us; and this is the guarantee of its stability and great destiny; and so far as it is a threat, it is that He

shall not appear, till the land and the people have reached the lowest depth of distress. The difficulty of the term translated 'the virgin' still remains. If that term had unequivocally expressed 'virginity' there would have been no difficulty. But probably the word, though apparently always used of an unmarried woman, means properly an adult young woman. At the same time the difficulty would not have been removed if the more strict term בְּתוּלָה *bethulah*, had been employed; for in Joel 1[8] that term is used of a young married woman. Nothing but some circumlocution would have been sufficient to obviate objection, and express the idea of virginity without ambiguity. It has been thought by some that the wife of the prophet is intended; but why call her the maiden? She is called the 'prophetess' in chap. 8[3]. Others think of the wife of the king. This is less unnatural, if any circumstances could be suggested for her being spoken of as the maiden. The presence of the article may be explained in two ways: either as generic, expressing *kind*, as we speak of *the* horse; or as pointing out a known individual. Now, there is a very particular Semitic use of this article. A noun is made definite sometimes just by the particular thing that is going to be said about it. For example, in Gen. 28[11] it is said, Jacob lighted upon a certain place, in Hebrew upon *the place;* and he dreamed a dream. The word 'place' is definite on account of what is about to be said of it,—the place where the incident just to be narrated befell. It might be that the article here is of this sort. A maiden—she who is to bear —shall bear a son, and call his name Immanuel.[1]

[1] Various explanations are given of the definite article: 1. Many call it the generic article. But it is doubtful if this article is ever used in making a prediction which does not apply to the whole genus or class. For this article English uses the indefinite article. For example, an horse for preservation is vain הַסּוּס, Heb. the horse, or as we say, horses. In the history of Gideon כַּאֲשֶׁר יָלֹק הַכֶּלֶב as the dog, or as we say, *a dog*, *i.e.* as dogs lap. Samson rent the lion, as one rends הַגְּדִי the kid, *i.e.* a kid or kids. If this were the usage, I

In Mic. 5[1-3] we read: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah . . . out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel. . . . Therefore will the Lord deliver them over until the time that one who will bear shall have brought forth. . . . And he shall stand and shall feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. . . . And this one shall be peace." Here we have the same circle of ideas as in Isaiah. The horizon of Micah is the same as that of Isaiah; it is bounded by the destruction of the Assyrian world-power. The same extraordinary ruler is looked for out of the house of David, and the same marked emphasis is laid upon his mother. The prophecy of Micah was spoken in the days of Hezekiah, and therefore not less than ten, possibly more than twenty, years after Isaiah's. It is not, of course, certain whether this prophecy be independent of Isaiah's, or a repetition of it. If it be independent, the prophet refers to her who shall bear, and whose bearing shall be the end of Israel's troubles; for the Lord will give them up to their enemies till that time, but the ruler shall come forth and deliver them. It is indisputable that Micah speaks here of the Messiah, and his reference to her who shall bear Him corroborates the interpretation which takes the Almah in Isaiah as the mother of the Messiah. On the other hand, if Micah's prophecy be dependent on Isaiah's, and a repetition of it, it must be

suspect the meaning would be not a virgin, but virgins shall bear sons,—the class.

2. The use of the article is probably one of two uses: (1) Either that peculiar use according to which a subject or person becomes definite to the mind of the writer just from the circumstances in which the person appears or the part he plays. This is a very common use; Moses wrote the prediction against Amalek בַּסֵּפֶר in the book, *i.e.* the book taken or used for the purpose. Rahab let down the spies בַּחֶבֶל by *the rope*, *i.e.* the rope used. Jael took the tent pin. In all these cases our language says *a* book, *a* rope, *a* tent pin. So here *an Almah;* she may be definite to the prophet's mind just from the event which he narrates connected with her,—she is the Almah of which this shall be true. Or (2) the article might refer to an already known Almah; this, of course, is the commonest use of the article.

regarded as an interpretation of it, an intimation of how it was read ten or twenty or more years after it was uttered. And again, this intimation tells in favour of regarding the Almah in Isaiah as the mother of the Messiah; for in Micah's time the prophecy still remained unfulfilled, and still bore on Israel's final destiny, and still contained the same pregnant meaning.

From this examination of the prophecy, it follows that what enables us to interpret it is partly the general scope of Isaiah's conceptions, and partly the general nature of prophecy. The prophet from the beginning had expressed his assurance from the nature of Jehovah and from the condition of the people, first, that great judgments must overtake them, but that a full end would not be made,—behind the judgments rose the final salvation. These were fixed conceptions of the prophet. From the beginning these general conceptions dominated all that he said, from his first appearance onwards. They were conceptions, however, which were rather of the nature of moral necessities, articles of belief, but held abstractly. Now, with the appearance of the Assyrian, called in by Ahaz, there suddenly presented themselves before the prophet's view the historical instruments through which his great moral certainties were to find fulfilment. Assyria would devastate Judah and Ephraim in common, and reduce the country to pasture-land and forest. In this way would Isaiah's anticipations of judgment find actual fulfilment.

But behind this, his anticipations of salvation would also be realized. The house of David, now corrupt, would suffer greater humiliations than overtook it even at the revolt of the ten tribes. The same fate would befall it, that would befall the people. They would be cut down to the root; yet out of the stock a new growth would spring, which would rise up into a new nation, and all that should be left would be called 'holy.' And in like manner the house of David, now unworthy, would be cut down to the roots; but out of the

root of Jesse a branch would grow on whom the spirit of the Lord would rest. This branch is Immanuel, who will arise amidst the nation's humiliation, which he will share; but he himself, as well as his name, is token of the final salvation of the Lord.

To our colder and more logical cast of mind the prophetic manner of representation occasions much difficulty. All these great movements seem to the prophet to follow rapidly on one another, to be all condensed within a brief space of time. Whatever be the explanation of this peculiarity of prophecy, that it is a characteristic of prophecy cannot be doubted. When we come to the second half of Isaiah, we shall find the perfect and final felicity of Israel represented as commencing with the restoration for which Cyrus gave permission; and in Daniel we observe the perfect kingdom of the Lord appearing at once on the death of the tyrant Antiochus. No explanation seems natural except we fall back on the prophet's idealism. Now that the world-power, in the form of Assyria, has come upon the stage, two great conceptions fill Isaiah's mind,—that of the kingdom of the world, the ideal foe of Jehovah, and that of Jehovah's kingdom itself. These two ideals fill the prophet's mind. He sees them coming into conflict. The conflict is of universal meaning—of absolute significance, and final in its issues. And behind the conflict rises the victorious kingdom of the truth: "For every greave of the warrior stamping in the fray, and the garments rolled in blood shall be for burning, for fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, and his name shall be called the Prince of peace."

Unless we realise the idealism of the prophets, and I may add, their poetry also, it is hopeless to seek to understand them. The greatest foe to the intelligence of the Old Testament is the prosaic mind—the mind that looks everywhere for bare, abstract dogma, and for definite predictions of the future, and is unable to perceive the bright colours of

idealism and imagination in which Old Testament truth is set forth. Yet truth is set forth in the Old Testament, the same truth as in the New, namely, the conflict of the kingdom of evil with the kingdom of the truth, and the victory of the latter, the eternal victory—a victory eternal and secure, because its issue is embodied in one who is God-with-us. The prophet paints a New Testament picture, though he sets it in an Old Testament frame.

In the prophecy contained in chaps. 8–9 the same modes of thought appear, and it will be sufficient just to mention the several steps. Under the figure of a great inundation by a river, the advance of the Assyrian power is described. He fills all his channels, rises over all his banks, overflows Ephraim, and sweeps also into Judah, rising to the neck and submerging all beneath his waters; and the outspreading of his wings fills the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel. But at the mention of Immanuel the prophet's courage rises, and he flings defiance at the Assyrian and all the peoples of the world under his standard: Rage, O ye peoples, but ye shall be broken to pieces. Gird yourselves, but ye shall be broken in pieces. Purpose a purpose, and it shall come to nought: for Immanuel—God is with us.[1]

From depicting the great calamity that is imminent, the prophet turns to exhort the people and to teach them, especially the pious among them, the attitude to observe until the judgment be overpast: "Call not anything a conspiracy which this people calls a conspiracy; neither fear ye what they fear. Sanctify Jehovah, and let Him be your fear." It is not the external foe that is the true object of dread, it is Jehovah; not that which is without the people, the world-forces, but He who is in the midst of them. And then the prophet expresses the attitude taken by himself: "I will wait for Jehovah, who hideth His face, and will look for Him." He feels himself entering upon a great darkness; and entrance

[1] Isa. $8^{9.\ 10}$.

upon it is inevitable. To him Jehovah's face is already hid; but speedily all will feel it; and a darkness will settle down on the land, which has no daybreak. Then some terrible pictures are given of the scanty, famished population, wandering over the desolate and sterile land: "And it shall come to pass that, when they are hungry, they will curse their god and their king, and will look upward."[1] And with this turning to heaven, the darkness is dispelled: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. In the former time He brought dishonour upon the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali; but in the latter time He has honoured it, the way of the sea, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people that sat in the region of the shadow of death, light has sprung up to them. For a child is born to us, and the government shall be on his shoulder; and of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David."

We have here just the same thoughts as before, the same scenes rapidly succeeding one another, and the same ultimate issue, the salvation of the Lord. The prophet is operating with great general conceptions. Yet it is impossible to hold these conceptions abstractly,—such is not the manner of the prophets; hence Isaiah embodies them in concrete phenomena, but makes them follow one another in rapid succession. To him and to all his contemporaries it did not occur that it would take seven hundred or eight hundred years to unrol that picture, and translate it into history. If he or his people had foreseen this, it is hard to see how their faith could have been sustained. But the hope was presented to them in such a way that it appeared realisable within a brief space of time. It was a salvation, like salvation at all times, that was ready to be revealed.

In chap. 7 it is not said that Immanuel will be of the house of David, though, the prophecy being given to the

[1] Isa. 8^{21}.

house of David, this is naturally suggested. Here it is expressly stated that the 'child born' is to sit upon the throne of David. The four names given to the prince are: a wonder of a Counsellor; God mighty; Father for ever; Prince of peace. These names are names proper to a ruler and king: he is a wonder of a counsellor, *i.e.* frames projects and enterprises beforehand in a wonderful or, as we might say, superhumanly wise manner; for the root פלא usually means that which is divine, or at least beyond man. Secondly, he is God mighty; the words are two nouns in apposition. This refers to the execution of his counsels. Third, he is everlasting father of his people. And, finally, Prince of peace; this is the final result of all, for peace means what we call salvation; the state of enjoyment of all that is called blessing. It is difficult to be sure whether this Prince be represented as taking any part in that conflict which results in the destruction of the foe of Jehovah's kingdom, or whether this be not attributed to Jehovah alone; in which case this great ruler appears only as the king of a people saved by Jehovah, whose salvation He eternally secured to them. This seems to be the manner of the representation, although there are scarcely materials to decide with certainty.

With regard to these four names, it may be noticed, first, that they are often used in reference to Jehovah Himself. In chap. 28^{29} it is said "this also cometh from Jehovah of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel." In chap. 10^{21} it is said that a "remnant shall return unto God-mighty," who in the preceding verse is called "Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel." In Jer. 31^{9} the Lord says: "I will cause them to walk in a straight way: for I am a Father unto Israel." In Isa. 63^{16}: "Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer." In Isa. 54^{10}: "The mountains shall depart; but My covenant of peace shall not be removed"; in chap. 66^{12}: "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river."

It is certainly the meaning of the prophet that the attributes expressed by these divine names really belong to the Davidic king, and are displayed by him in the rule of the people. It is said his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor. The name in Hebrew expresses that which the person is, or specially that which is visible and manifest in him. Being called anything, implies being that thing. In chap. 1^{26} it is said of Jerusalem: "Afterwards thou shalt be called City of Righteousness." In chap. 4^{3}: "He that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy." It is not just to draw a distinction between 'being' and 'being called'; being called is merely a recognition of being a wonderful counsellor, etc. The meaning is not that the Davidic king is a mere sign that Jehovah is present with His people in counsel, in might, in fatherhood, and peace. Jehovah is present in these attributes and operations in the person of the king; or rather the king is the manifestation of Jehovah present in these attributes. It is evident that the terms describe that which the king is, not that of which he is a mere symbol; for in chap. 11, where virtually the same statements are made, it is said "that the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, a spirit of counsel and of might." Here the counsel and might, being the fruits of the spirit of the Lord, are, of course, personal attributes of the king.

Now it may not be quite easy to say what precisely is meant by these statements of the prophet regarding the identification of Jehovah and the Messianic king. Of course it is not meant that they are personally one; that the Messiah is Jehovah or God. The distinction between the two is maintained. In our modes of thought, a factor is always introduced which hardly appears at all in the Old Testament, namely, the nature or essence of God. And we put the question, Is the Messiah the same in essence with Jehovah? But probably the idea of the substance of the divine nature does not occur in the Old Testament.

The nearest that any passage appears to come is Isa. 31^3: "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; their horses flesh, and not spirit." Here God is considered spiritual or spirit: but 'spirit' in the Old Testament does not express a substance, but a quality. As flesh is a synonym for weakness and decay, spirit expresses power, efficient energy. And this is, no doubt, the meaning of this verse. The question is what the Egyptians and their horses can effect against Jehovah and spirit. When God is thought of as spiritual, that implies not that He is a particular kind of substance, but, negatively, that He is not flesh, and not representable in form, nor subject to any of the limitations of matter, and positively, that He is power—particularly life-giving power, or that highest kind of power which we name spiritual and ethical. The Old Testament conceives Jehovah as a person, no doubt; but it does not speculate on any substance which has attributes—the attributes are those of a person ethical and spiritual—in the sense of powerful. Now, it might seem a descent from the lofty appellations in chap. 9, such as God-mighty, when in chap. 11 it is said that "the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon the Messiah." The spirit is sixfold or threefold, and the attributes conferred are, as before, those of a ruler of the kingdom of God. (1) Wisdom and discernment, *i.e.* in judging particular causes that may come before the king. (2) Counsel and might: these point to his more public and general function as regent of the people as a whole; and (3) knowledge and the fear of the Lord: these have reference to his own personal knowledge of God. To us mere endowment with the spirit of Jehovah seems a less thing than to be called God-mighty. But again the Old Testament doctrine of the spirit may modify this feeling.

The doctrine of the spirit of God in the Old Testament is certainly obscure. The Old Testament does not teach that Jehovah is spirit,—except as a synonym for power; it teaches that He has a spirit. He has a spirit, just as man

has a spirit. And though in speech we can distinguish between man and his spirit, virtually the spirit of man is man. And the spirit of God is God, but with that connotation which spirit always carries of energy and power. The spirit of God is God exerting power, especially life-giving power, or that highest power which we call spiritual. And though there are some passages where Jehovah seems to exert this energy, not being Himself present, He is usually considered present. The spirit of the Lord is the Lord present and exerting spiritual energy. And thus chap. 11 expresses the same conceptions as chap. 9.

The significance of the prophet's words probably lies in the turn that he gives to the old conception of the perfect condition of the people. This conception was that the perfect salvation of the people would be attained through Jehovah's personal coming and abiding among them; then the union of God and man would be perfect, and the idea of the redemptive covenant would be realised. The very significant variation which this prophet gives to that conception is that Jehovah's final and perfect presence will be realised through the Davidic king; He will be God-is-with-us, God-mighty. This is the lofty height which the Messianic idea reaches in Isaiah.

It is quite probable that that conception which we express by saying that God *became* man was not yet present. Readers of this prophet would not yet conclude that the Davidic king was God; only that Jehovah was really present in him, in His power and wisdom and fatherly goodness, for the saving and ruling of His people for ever; only that Jehovah manifested Himself truly and fully in him. The passage goes very far; and though our own doctrine of incarnation contains a positive conception in it which Old Testament saints perhaps did not entertain, we are obliged to limit that positive by negations which seem somewhat to neutralise it. Though we use the word 'became,' we affirm

at the same time that the two natures remain distinct, and that the divine suffered no change, and no confusion or composition with the human.

The prophet's general eschatological view is very wide, and in various directions much more developed than that of Amos and Hosea. In Amos, no process of redemption appears within the people. He that is unjust remains unjust still, and he that is righteous is righteous still. The sinners of God's people are destroyed. The nation is sifted with a sieve, and not a grain falls to the ground. The separation of righteous and wicked is, so to speak, mechanical. The righteous are restored, and the throne of David is set up anew. Only a few general outlines are drawn by the prophet.

The representation in Hosea is different. He does not distinguish between righteous and wicked. The nation is to him one moral person, the faithless spouse of Jehovah. The Lord allures her into the wilderness, He speaks to her heart, and she responds as in the days of old. She comes to understand that not the Baals, but Jehovah gave her her corn and wine; that He alone is God; and she says, "I will return unto my first husband." She takes unto her words, and says, "Take away all iniquity, receive us graciously: so will we render unto thee the calves of our lips. Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more unto the work of our hands, Ye are our gods." Israel seeks Jehovah her God and David her king in the latter days. That is to say, the people in its unity is converted.

In Amos, the restoration is accomplished by Jehovah, though no mention is made of any means or process. In Hosea, the community repents, and comes to a right mind. This repentance is brought about by God's providential treatment of the people, by their exile and sorrows. In Isaiah there appears the idea of a remnant. The conception of his inaugural vision is maintained throughout. The nation and

land suffer repeated devastations; the tree is cut down to the root, but the stock remains, the source of a new growth, —a remnant shall return to the mighty God. The prophet does not seem to contemplate any break, as there is in Hosea, —when Israel is not My people. There is continuity,—the holy seed is imperishable. But around this point several questions arise. By what means is this remnant preserved or created?

It is probable that Isaiah gathered around him a band of faithful men; that he not only taught, but practically founded a new community. A remarkable passage in chap. 8 suggests what was the principle that bound this community together, —faith in Jehovah: "The Lord of hosts, Him shall ye sanctify; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. . . . Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait for the Lord, who hideth His face, and I will look for Him." This was the preserving principle on the side of men. On the side of the Lord there was, no doubt, His strange work, His chastisements, and His deliverance. But the prophet signalises also a more special power: "The populous city shall be deserted, the Ophel and the watch-tower shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses; until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field (*i.e.* that now is) be thought a bush."[1] The same spirit that shall rest on the king shall also be poured out on the people. Hence a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in justice. And each man shall be to all others an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And eyes shall no more be dim, and ears shall hearken; the heart also of the hasty shall understand knowledge. A spiritual regeneration of the community shall follow.

[1] Isa. $32^{14ff.}$

Contact with the empire of the world widened Isaiah's horizon, and he draws the nations into his picture of the final condition of things: "Many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths."[1] In this connection there are two very remarkable chapters (chaps. 18 and 19), the one referring to Ethiopia, the most distant land, and the other to Egypt: "In that day there shall be brought a present (*i.e.* a token of homage to Jehovah) from a people tall and smooth, a people terrible from their beginning and hitherto; from a people that meteth out and treadeth down, whose land the rivers divide—*i.e.* Ethiopia—to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, to Mount Zion." More astonishing still is the prediction regarding Egypt, because it rises to the most perfect universalism, including in the salvation of the Lord Israel's mortal foe the Assyrian: "In that day there shall be an highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship Jehovah with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be a third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for the Lord of hosts shall bless them, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance."[2]

This is so extraordinary as to seem to many incredible from Isaiah. Perhaps we should date the passage after the great disaster to Sennacherib's army and the retreat of the Assyrian. Judah enjoyed peace, the aged prophet's battles were all fought and won. Never had Jehovah been so exalted in righteousness as after that stroke which He inflicted on the Assyrian; and amidst a world at peace the prophet was free to follow out the ideals that had always floated before his mind; for, in truth, though he does pre-

[1] Isa. 2^{1-4}. [2] Isa. $19^{23ff.}$.

dict, he less predicts than dreams great moral dreams which embrace the world. Finally, in this connection, it is to be noticed that the nations are brought into relationship with the Messianic king: "It shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, which standeth for a signal to the peoples,—unto him shall the nations seek."[1] The old promise made to Abraham, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," is fulfilled.

In regard to Israel itself, of course, it is part of Isaiah's faith, first, that the two kingdoms shall be reunited under the Davidic king: "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah envy Ephraim"; secondly, that all the members of the people scattered among all nations shall be restored: "The Lord will stretch out His hand a second time to recover His people that shall be left out of Assyria and all the countries of the earth"; thirdly, that under the Messianic king there will be a condition of peace. This does not need to be dwelt upon. But this peace, so profound among men, descends even to the lower creation. Man rises to his place of supremacy, and the little child, the weakest thing among men, leads the most savage, and plays with the most deadly, of the creatures. Even the enmities in the lower world itself cease,—"the wolf and the lamb lie down together." This may be poetry, but it is profoundly moral poetry. The violence of creature to creature could not but jar upon the sensibility of this idealist, and blur the picture of perfect peace which he beholds, "when the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"; and He removes it. Still, we should do the moral idealist and poet an injustice if we sought to make him responsible here for historical prediction.

There is one thing which surprises us in all these early prophets. In their teaching regarding the redemption or restitution of the people, there is not one word uttered in

[1] Isa. 11^{10}.

regard to what we call atonement. Their line of thought is uniformly this: The sins of the people must bring great judgments upon them,—exile and desolation of the land. These judgments, however, are not mere penal inflictions, they are disciplinary and educative. They have a double object in view, first, to teach the people the true nature of Jehovah, His absolutely moral being and rule: Jehovah of hosts shall be exalted in righteousness, and the holy God sanctified through judgment;[1] and, secondly, which is but the other side of this, to bring the people to the consciousness of their sins. When these ends are effected, then the forgiveness of Jehovah is bestowed, with no mediation of sacrifice or other expiation.

It may be that the idea was present that the chastisements of the people were in a sense satisfaction for their guilt; but it is doubtful if this idea be anywhere clearly expressed. It is rather that the forgiveness of God is ready, whenever the needful conditions are present. In the second half of Isaiah there appears for the first time something different. But in the early prophets the Restoration is not mediated. It is an act of Jehovah's forgiving mercy. The first of the two conditions is, that Jehovah's nature be displayed, and homage done to it by the people; and the second, which differs little from the first, is, that the people acknowledge their sin and repent. In two respects, however, the prophet Isaiah mediates the restoration, first, by his teaching regarding the remnant,—this keeps up the continuity on the side of the people; and, second, by his teaching regarding the spirit, — which appears as the means through which Jehovah works upon the people; though this last conception awaits fuller development in later prophets.

Everywhere there appears in the prophecies the idea of the remnant which blossoms out into a new nation. Thus the continuity of the people is not absolutely broken. But

[1] Isa. 5^{16}.

the point of interest is the principle which preserves this remnant. Isaiah, as we have seen, gathered around him a band of faithful disciples, and by their means practically founded a new community. This was the preserving and mediating principle on the side of men. On the side of God, besides His strange work of chastisement, there was the power exercised by the spirit that was to be poured out from on high, a spirit that should rest on king and people alike.

Such, then, is a sketch of the way in which prophetic thought regarding the Davidic origin of the perfect king of the kingdom of God developed through many generations of prophecy. In his dying words, David himself used the figure of heat and light after rain producing luxuriant vegetation, to represent the fostering of his race by God till there should come out of it the Messiah, the just ruler among men; and he used the expression, "Surely He will make it to sprout forth" (יַצְמִיחַ). And the root צמח became technical to express this idea, and the term runs through all the prophets to express the *branch* out of Jesse's root. Isaiah says: "In that day shall the *branch* of the Lord be beautiful and glorious";[1] Jeremiah: "In those days and at that time will I cause the *branch* of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land."[2] Zechariah similarly exclaims: "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee . . . for, behold, I will bring forth My servant the *Branch*."[3]

Thus, through prophet after prophet, the echo of David's words is heard, till they are taken up by the angel in the annunciation to Mary: "And behold thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son . . . He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

[1] Isa. 4^{22}. [2] Jer. 33^{15}. [3] Zech. 3^{8}.

CHAPTER XXI.

Deutero-Isaiah's Outlook on the Future.

The second part of Isaiah, if the finest part of all the prophetical literature, is certainly also the most difficult, not in language, but in meaning. The smaller prophets are comparatively easy to comprehend, just because they are small, and because they belong to a special historical condition of things. The latter part of Isaiah is very much more complex; the conceptions of the prophet are broader and more general, and it is less easy to arrange them so as to obtain a clear conception of his whole scheme of thought. Added to this difficulty, there is another. The profound redemptive conceptions of the writer have been regarded as having received a definite historical fulfilment, and it is extremely difficult for the interpreter to avoid reading the book in the light of this fulfilment, and assuming that the prophet had in his own mind reference to it.

Now, we are certainly right in assuming these two things —*first*, that the features of the Servant of the Lord, as drawn by the prophet, have reappeared in Christ, and the prophet's statements have been realised, or more than realised, in Him; and, *secondly*, that this is not a mere fact. More can be said than just this, that in fact the prophet's picture has been verified in the Messiah. There must be a connection between prophecy and fulfilment. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning." The feeling of the apostles, that that which was said in the Old Testament had a future bearing, and looked forward to the things of Christ, was not

without justification. The thoughts of the prophet regarding the meaning of the Servant's sufferings were given him at this early age with a view to their fulfilment in the Son of God, to prepare for it before it came, and to make it credible when it came, and in order, also, to help to the understanding of it.

But while these two points are held, there may be much difference of opinion upon another point, namely, what subject had the prophet in his own view, when he spoke of the Servant of the Lord? Was it a future person, such as has historically appeared in the Messiah? or was it a subject of another kind? There are many things in the Old Testament which have found their full verification only in Christ, which were certainly spoken by Old Testament writers originally of subjects different from Him. Now, at any rate, it is just this question, What subject had the prophet in his own mind? that we, as historical interpreters of his prophecy, are under obligation to answer. The meaning of the prophecy is what the prophet in his day meant by it. We all admit that Scripture does not consist of words, but of thoughts expressed in words. Revelation is not revelation until it has formed itself in thoughts in a human mind.

However we may speak of inspiration, we must assume that the effect of it was, *first*, that certain thoughts arose in the prophet's mind; and, *secondly*, that these thoughts were then expressed in suitable language. We are apt to fall into the idea that the prophet wrote words, without thoughts in his own mind having preceded them. How inveterate this way of thinking is, appears from the following language of so thoughtful a writer as Mr. Stanton in his *Jewish and Christian Messiah:* "It is evidently conceivable, and it is a view which none can consider derogatory to the inspiration of the prophets, that they may have been moved by the Spirit to utter language of which they themselves, not to say others of their time, could only very partially understand the signi-

ficance."[1] Will any one, who reads the prophets with intelligence enough to feel in their writings the intense movements of mind which everywhere characterise them, be satisfied with hearing them described as persons who 'uttered language'? What the prophets on all occasions did was to express thoughts in language. These thoughts they were enabled to reach; and, having reached them, they then expressed them. It is quite conceivable that to us now their words may have a larger sense than they themselves expressed by them; because, for one reason, to specify no more, the subjects of which they spoke—such, for example, as the Church of God—have now acquired a larger meaning.

Thus, I think, it will appear that what we have to inquire into is the prophet's meaning, and nothing else; because this was just the truth which God enabled him to reach, and the truth that was needful to be laid before the people of God in the prophet's day. In such an inquiry, therefore, we should, as much as possible, keep fulfilment from exercising any influence upon our investigation. We assume that the great prophetic thoughts will receive fulfilment—fulfilment in history. But prophecy does not consist exclusively of thoughts. There is another element in prophecy, a relative element, besides the thoughts which have the character of universal. The prophets were practical teachers; they were also profoundly realistic. Hence they never content themselves with giving out general conceptions; they always throw their general conceptions into a concrete fabric.

What they, in the main, speak about is redemption,—the perfection of God's people; but this perfection belongs to the time near at hand. They construct a new world, in which their conceptions are embodied, and of which their conceptions form the spiritual framework. But this new world is always their own world, the world of their own time pene-

[1] P. 96.

trated and transfigured by their spiritual conceptions. Their construction was one for their own age: a broad, general conception, fitted to sustain the hearts of religious men of the time. It is a conception of redemption, and of the perfect condition of the kingdom of God, supposing this perfect condition to have supervened in the prophet's own day, and in the conditions of the world existing in his time. Now, for one thing, the Church of God was confined to the Jews in his day. Hence it is the restoration and perfect felicity of Israel, God's people, that fills the foreground of the picture.

But fulfilment does not take place quite in conformity with the prophet's construction. He put all his great thoughts into the fabric, and saw them all verified in the new world at once. But the hand of history takes down the prophet's brilliant structure, and gives fulfilment to one thought at one time, and to another thought at a later time. The prophet's structure was a fabric representing the perfect end, and it may be that the end will reflect it truly; but, historically, it goes into fulfilment, piece by piece. Just as an iceberg is formed in the Arctic seas,—and as it could be formed nowhere else,—and as it travels southwards gives up here one splendid wing or projection, and there another, to the surrounding ocean, so the great prophetic construction, formed in each prophet's conditions of life, as it moves down the sea of time, gives up to history one wing after another, until it is wholly absorbed, and goes into realisation.

That the prophet's construction is one out of the materials of his own time, and that he places the realisation of it in his own time, is admitted by writers on prophecy. Delitzsch calls the peculiarity the human element in prophecy. One may question the wisdom of drawing a distinction between the divine and the human in Scripture. If we reflect upon it, it may seem to us that what Delitzsch calls the human was nothing but the divine in the form necessary for those times. Whatever we call it, it was absolutely necessary that

the prophets should set before men's minds these general constructions of the perfect kingdom of God, and that they should, in their eager hope of their fulfilment, represent them as near at hand. Men's hearts could not otherwise have been sustained. To take an example, Isaiah, in chaps. 7–9, represents the great descendant of David, the child born and the son given, as about to appear immediately after the desolations of the Assyrian invasion. He eats milk and honey, the only food remaining in a land reduced to a pastoral condition. The hope sustained men, and enabled them to live through the disasters about to fall on them. Would the people's hearts have been upheld, or their faith made strong, if the prophet had been himself told, and had in turn told his countrymen, that eight hundred years after their day the victorious Messiah would appear? Or would the people that dwelt in Jerusalem have been enabled to live in their day, and with their thoughts, if they had been plainly told that the Messiah's kingdom, when it did come, would be altogether spiritual, and the Holy City be no fitter place to worship the Father in than any other?

Religion must be drawn into our life: our hearts must be engaged, our hopes must be awakened, and, for the time, we must be nourished on narrower hopes, such as we are able in our condition to cherish, that, through the discipline of them, we may rise up to a larger hope. And just as Isaiah, in the Assyrian age, presented the hope of the future king of the house of David in such a form as to uphold faith in that day, it is possible that the later chapters may present the great conception of vicarious atonement in such a way as to comfort the people of God at that later time,—not by representing that atonement as a thing long future, but as something actual in the history of the people of that time. A consideration of our own life now and of the life of the Church, and how at one period we live by hopes which at a later time we outlive,—but which helped us to move into

wider circles of life,—a consideration of this will help us better to understand the Old Testament, and how it was that the great Christian truths were not presented at once in their perfect clearness to Old Testament believers, than anything else. In a word, if we would remember that the Old Testament revelation was given to enable the people of God, in their circumstances and with their thoughts, to *live* to God, this would be the readiest key to open its meaning.

The object of these remarks is to impress the idea that no particular doctrine of the prophet can be properly understood without some comprehension of his scheme of thought as a whole. It can lead to no satisfactory result, for example, to fasten our attention on one or two isolated chapters, as the 42nd, the 49th, or even the 53rd, and deduce a meaning from them alone, while we neglect the other chapters or the general teaching of the prophet. It may well happen that what might seem to us the natural meaning of these chapters may be a meaning entirely excluded, when the general conceptions of the prophecy are taken into account. The defect of most commentaries is that they make no attempt to present the general scheme of the prophet's thoughts, but deal with individual verses, or at most with short passages. A full view of the prophet's teaching would follow something like the following outline: (1) The prophet's doctrine of Jehovah, the God of Israel. In all the prophets, the doctrine of God is the primary thing; morals are but the reflection of religion. The people and their conduct are to be estimated from the point of view of that which Jehovah is,—for His people must be like Himself. In this prophet, the doctrine of Jehovah might be called the source of all his other conceptions. The prophecy is little else than a development on all sides of his conception of Jehovah, God of Israel, who is God alone. (2) After the doctrine of Jehovah would come the doctrine

of the people; but perhaps this would better be treated in connection with the Servant of the Lord.

And therefore the second heading would naturally be what I have called *construction*,—in other words, the prophet's doctrine or conception of redemption. Now, this general division would embrace such points as these: (1) The prophet's general position in history—the Exile, more particularly, shortly before Babylon was captured by Cyrus. In order to appreciate any writer's thoughts, we must know his position in history, and the great factors of life in his day. (2) His general scheme of construction—this would embrace a survey of the great forces, moral and civil, of his age, Babylon the idolatrous kingdom, Cyrus the anointed of the Lord, Israel the Lord's servant; in general, a survey of what, in that age and in that condition of the world, Israel being alone the people of the Lord, would be redemption; what the prophet of that time would consider, and did consider, to be the redemption of the people of God. (3) Going somewhat more into particulars, the subject of redemption—the people of Israel—would come to be considered. What was the prophet's conception of Israel? of its meaning and its mission? And here a certain peculiar tendency to idealise on the part of the prophet would require attention. There are three subjects whom he thus treats, all of which seem identical, namely, Jacob or Israel, Zion or Jerusalem, and the Servant of the Lord. These three personifications have all the same basis, namely, the people, although under somewhat different aspects. (4) Then a more particular treatment of the subject of the Servant of the Lord would be required. In chap. 41^8 the Servant of the Lord is unquestionably the people of Israel under certain conceptions.

The only question which appears to me to be worth treating now is this: Does the prophet maintain this position throughout his prophecy? Is the Servant of the Lord always the conception of the people,—this conception elevated into

an ideal Being? or is the Servant of the Lord an actual future person? If a person at all, he must be future, and his sufferings future. But here the question will arise: Do the prophet's general conceptions leave any room or place for sufferings in the future? Is not his horizon bounded by the restoration from exile, now in his day imminent? Is not this restoration, as he conceives it, final, and the initiation of Israel's perfect redemption and felicity? If that be so, there is manifestly no room, according to his method of conception, for sufferings after the restoration. The Servant has a great work after the restoration, namely, to be the light of the Gentiles. And his manner of working is described in chap. 42^{2-4}: "He shall not cry, nor lift up his voice. The bruised reed he shall not break: he will bring forth judgment in truth; and the countries shall wait on his teaching." But for suffering there is no place.

The sufferings of the Servant must therefore lie either in the present or in the past of the prophet, or in both. But on any of the suppositions the Servant cannot be an individual. This is a point, therefore, deserving of consideration. But altogether apart from this question, who the Servant himself is, there are the very profound conceptions expressed by the prophet in connection with him, namely, his sufferings in bearing the sins of his people, and their restoration through these sufferings,—"by whose stripes we have been healed." Then, lastly, there is the prophet's conception of the final condition of the world; the restoration of Israel, and their place in the midst of the heathen; and the relation of the heathen world to the people of God.

Now, it may be taken for granted that the scene of this series of prophecies as a whole is the Babylonian Exile. The prophet may have lived during this period, or he may have been transported in spirit into it, as some hold, though living at a previous period; but on every hand it is admitted that the general movements of

his great prophecy take place here; and, as I have already stated in chap. 15, my personal conviction is that such was the prophet's actual position. The opening note of the prophecy is comfort to a people who had been long enduring a hard warfare: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people. Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is fulfilled, that her iniquity is pardoned." The prophecy is little else than a series of homilies of comfort preached to an oppressed and sinful people, the people of God, on God's attributes as God and Jehovah, and illustrated from the history of the people of God already past, and of which the whole burden is: "Your redemption draweth nigh."

So many different things coincide in pointing to the Exile that it is really no longer subject to doubt. In the very exordium the company of heralds is represented as bringing good tidings to Jerusalem, and saying to the cities of Judah: "Behold your God; for Jehovah returns to Zion, as of old, through the wilderness, leading home His people from their captivity in Babylon, as in former times from Egypt: Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence (Babylon). . . . Ye shall not go out in haste, neither shall ye go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward."[1] And elsewhere it is said: "Jehovah confirmeth the word of His servant, and saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be rebuilt: that saith of Cyrus, He is My servant, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be rebuilt; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."[2] Passages to the same effect are: 45^{13} 49^{8} 51^{3} 52^{9} 57^{14} 58^{12} 62^{4} 64^{10}.

And with this coincides the frequent reference to the condition of the exiles in passing through the wilderness; for example: "The poor and needy seek water, and there

[1] Isa. 52^{12}. [2] Isa. $44^{26ff.}$.

is none. . . . I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the deserts springs of water."[1] For the new exodus shall be greatly more glorious than the former one: "Thus saith the Lord, that maketh a way in the sea . . . remember ye not the former things. Behold, I will do a new thing: I will give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, Mine elect."[2] "Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye to the end of the earth; say ye, The Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob. And they thirsted not when He led them through the desert . . . He clave the rock, and the waters gushed out."[3]

Now, it would be altogether out of place to argue that these passages are largely hyperbolical and not capable of being realised actually, and are therefore to be interpreted spiritually. No doubt it would do entire injustice to this prophet, if we imagined him a mere enthusiastic patriot, and failed to find the spiritual truths of redemption in his prophecies. But that we are on firm historical ground in his prophecies, and not among brilliant religious metaphors, is evident enough from such passages as this: "I have raised him (Cyrus) up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall rebuild My city, and he shall let go My captives, saith the Lord of hosts."[4]

But perhaps something more particular can be said than that the general scene of the prophecies is the Exile. The place which the prophet occupies is before the fall of Babylon, but after the victorious career of Cyrus had commenced. There are some writers who imagine they can connect the various parts of the book with distinct steps in Cyrus's career of victory; but few have seen anything solid or trustworthy in such combinations. Seinecke, in his work on these chapters under the title, *The Evangelist of the Old Testament*, endeavours to show that the whole

[1] Isa. $41^{17f.}$. [2] Isa. $43^{16\text{-}20}$. [3] Isa. $48^{20f.}$. [4] Isa. 45^{13}.

prophecy presupposes the issue of the edict of Cyrus in 536 permitting the Jews to return home; a view which cannot be maintained without very artificial treatment of many passages relating to Cyrus, *e.g.*: "I will go before thee, and will make rough places plain: the gates of brass I will break, and cut in sunder the bars of iron."[1]

The career of Cyrus is, however, represented as attracting the eyes of the world: "Who raised up from the east him whom righteousness calleth to follow it?"[2] His progress, therefore, had already been one of victory; the prophet can appeal to it, and makes it an argument in favour of the sole Deity of Jehovah: "I have raised up one from the north, and he is come: from the rising of the sun one who shall call upon My name; and he cometh upon satraps as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay."[3] But though already entered upon a victorious career, and though the nations are panic-stricken at his prowess,—"The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth trembled,"[4]—he has not yet overthrown Babylon. The prophet takes up his position before this event, which he predicts; and he is thus, even if we suppose him a contemporary of Cyrus, still a prophet, even in the narrower sense of that word.

It seems certain that most of these prophecies were written at a time anterior to the capture of Babylon. In chap. 43^{24} it is said: "Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer; For your sakes I send (proph. perf.) to Babylon, and will bring them all down as fugitives, in the ships of their cry." Chap. 47, which is an ode of triumph over the downfall of Babylon, might seem composed after that event: "Come down, sit in the dust, virgin daughter of Babylon; take the mill and grind corn, pass over the rivers a captive"; but that the ode is prophetic, sung in anticipation of the fall of the city, appears plain enough from vv.[8. 9]: "Thou hast said, I shall never sit as a widow, nor know bereavement of

[1] Isa. 45^{2}. [2] Isa. 41^{2}. [3] Isa. 41^{25}. [4] Isa. 41^{5}.

children; therefore these two things shall come upon thee in one day, bereavement and widowhood." And though the strong remonstrance with Israel in chap. 48 again assumes the fall of the city, it is merely in anticipation, as v.[14] shows: "He whom Jehovah loveth shall perform his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be upon the Chaldeans."

Ewald, followed by many other scholars, makes a great break at the end of chap. 48, and considers that in the meantime Babylon had fallen, and that the following chapters were composed really after this event, remarking that from chap. 49 onwards we hear no more of Cyrus or of Babylon. There is this amount of truth in the remark that the name Babylon is not again mentioned, but there is frequent allusion to it; and it appears doubtful if the situation of the prophet has undergone any change. In chap. 49[24] we read: "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty? shall the captive of the oppressor escape?" *i.e.* the captive of the Babylonian. "Thus saith the Lord, I will make thy oppressors to eat their own flesh, and drink their own blood"; apparently, therefore, the blow had not yet fallen on Babylon. Again, in chap. 52[4]: "Thus saith the Lord, My people went down to Egypt to sojourn there; and Assyria oppressed them without cause: and now what do I here (*i.e.* in Babylon), saith Jehovah, that My people are taken away for nought? they that rule over them do shout (as taskmasters), and My name continually all the day is blasphemed." This seems to imply that the power of Babylon had not yet been broken. And in the same chapter, alluding to the redemption from Babylon, the prophet exclaims: "Away, away, go ye out thence, touch no unclean thing."

It is doubtful, indeed, if the point of view of the prophet alters throughout the whole twenty-seven chapters. Some scholars consider that the last four chapters must have been composed after the return. This is quite possible in itself, even though the unity of authorship be affirmed. In the

earlier prophecies the prophet's position seems in Babylon among the exiles. He may have returned with them, or conceived their return, and spoken some words from that point of view. The evidence is not very striking or conclusive on either side. But up to the end of chap. 62 his position appears to be unchanged. In 55^{12} we read: "For with joy shall ye go forth, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing,"—a passage which shows that the new exodus was only as yet anticipated. And in chap. 62^{10} it is still no more than anticipated: "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the peoples. Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought unto, A city not forsaken."

Now, it is of the utmost importance, when we seek to understand the prophecy, and the conceptions of the prophet, to keep this standing-point of his clearly before our minds. He maintains the same position throughout his whole prophecy. He stands immediately before the downfall of Babylon at the hand of Cyrus, of which he is perfectly assured. He is equally assured that on the fall of the Babylonian Empire his captive countrymen will be set free,—the restoration is at hand. "He (Cyrus) shall rebuild My city, and let go My captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts."[1] But this restoration, as he conceives it, is final. The historical Restoration that actually took place in no way accords with his idea, which is that of a complete ingathering of all the scattered fragments of the people of the Lord: "I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; every

[1] Isa. 45^{13}.

one that is called by My name" (*i.e.* every one of the people of Jehovah).[1] And again: "I will make all My mountains a way, and My highways shall be lifted up. Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth: for the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have compassion upon His afflicted."[2]

The restoration is of all Israel, and it is final; for all nature breaks out into singing over it, as the consummation of redemption. But, of course, in the prophet's conception, this is not another restoration from that about to be effected by Cyrus. It is one restoration, but this is how the prophet conceives of it. Thus we perceive that the prophet, according to his way of looking at things, stands at the end of the history of Israel. There is really now only one step more to be taken—the Restoration: "Israel's warfare is over, and her sin pardoned; the Lord shall lead His people home through the wilderness, and His glory shall be revealed to all flesh; and He shall feed His flock like a shepherd for ever." The prophet conceives himself to be standing before a restoration which is final and universal, a point of momentous consequence in regard to the whole interpretation of the book. If the prophet conceives himself as standing before a restoration which is final and universal, —that is, if he conceives the restoration by Cyrus, which he is assured will follow the overthrow of Babylon, as the redemption, in full, of Israel, according to the words, "Her warfare is over, her iniquity is pardoned,"—then this restoration or redemption is really the only thing which he predicts; it is, in truth, the only event in the history of Israel now to take place. He stands, in fact, before the one final step of Israel's history; all the rest of its history lies behind him.

[1] Isa. 43^{6}.

[2] Isa. $49^{11\text{-}13}$.

His book, therefore, is not in the main an unrolling of the future, it is a retrospect, it is a reading of the meaning of the history of God's people, their sufferings and their patience and testimony. Consequently, the Servant of the Lord and his sufferings are not, in the view of the prophet, future; to him they are past and present. And, undeniably, it will follow from this that the Servant cannot be an individual person, and his sufferings cannot appear to the prophet to be future. Because really the only thing future, according to his conception from the position which he occupies, is the restoration, or final redemption and deliverance: with that deliverance the final felicity of Israel begins, and consequently sufferings after this restoration are entirely excluded.

Now, we are very liable to allow ourselves in reading the prophets to be influenced by history, and to impose an interpretation on a prophet's book which will make it a great prediction of history, or which will find, in historical events lying between the prophet and our day, a progressive fulfilment of his words. But the prophets did not write history beforehand, though, no doubt, their conceptions find fulfilment in history. Events do not always happen in the order in which they set their conceptions; at least very great spaces of time have been intercalated between occurrences which they represent as close upon one another. It is safest, therefore, to discard history, for history is as yet but a fragment; the prophet's conceptions reach out to the end of time, and here history fails us. It is also safest not to allow ourselves to be distracted by fulfilment, for the same is true of this; it is as yet imperfect, and the unequal lights which it casts upon the prophet's page disturb the eye. The conceptions of a prophet, and the way in which he connects them, may be learned from his book as from any other book; and there is nothing to hinder us from understanding him.

Now, we have learned enough in our study of Old Testament prophecy to know that though it speaks of the end of all things, though every prophet does this, yet to every one of them the horizon was near. The evolution that should issue in the end—the revelation of the glory of Jehovah and the peace of His people—was a moral evolution; and a single step or two led to the final issue. Thus, in the earlier chapters of Isaiah, the child born and the son given appears in the condition of desolation occasioned by the Assyrian invasion. Every prophet brings up the end in connection with the great movements of his own day and immediately on the back of them. And so in this second half of Isaiah, that final issue, which in the earlier part of Isaiah follows on the great Assyrian empire, follows on the downfall of the Babylonian, just as in Daniel again it follows on the overthrow of the Greek empire. The horizon of Deutero-Isaiah is bounded by the restoration of Israel from exile. As events immediately following this, he describes the perfect condition of the people of God, and the evangelising of the world. This must be acknowledged to be the main conception, or vision, of the prophet.

If, however, we read his words in the light of history, and suppose that his mode of representation and his disposition of events will be strictly historical, we are very apt to suppose that the order of his book will be something like this: First, a prediction of the restoration of Israel from captivity in Babylon, such as we learn from history actually occurred; second, a prophecy of the redemption of Israel from sin through the sufferings of the righteous Servant at a time subsequent to the restoration from captivity,—a redemption which we know was effected in the death of Christ; and, lastly, some glimpses of the final glory of the people of God. This order would be that of history. But such is not the order of the prophet's book; nor is it anything like a fair description of it. For, in the first place, the restoration from Babylon, which took

place historically, was in no sense such a restoration as the prophet predicted, which was a restoration of all the scattered fragments of Israel in every land. Second, the restoration he predicted does not precede, but follows the atonement of Israel's sin through the sufferings of the Servant; for this atonement is just what makes the restoration possible and is the ground of it,—the punishment of Israel, which includes the sufferings of the Servant, terminating with the termination of the Captivity.

This is a point of extreme importance. In such commentaries as those of Cheyne and others, the question, What is the moral explanation of the restoration from captivity? is never raised. It is treated as a thing that does not need to have any account given of it, or any cause assigned to it. But our interpretation of prophecy has, I hope, already made it clear that, to the prophets, there are no such things as mere events. All events are embodiments and illustrations or exhibitions of moral principles; and the restoration from captivity must be so also. That which led to the Exile was the sin of Israel,—the Exile was the punishment of Israel's sin. And before Israel can be restored from captivity her sin must be forgiven. And forgiveness is based on the work of the Servant, which consequently must precede the restoration.

According to the prophet's view, therefore, the sufferings of the Servant of the Lord lie on the prophet's side of the restoration, not on our side of it. In truth, as Delitzsch rightly says, since the universal salvation breaks forth immediately on the restoration from captivity,—which the prophet felt to be close at hand through Cyrus,—there is, after this, no room for suffering. The state of the people of God is that of perfect peace. It is the state described in chap. 60: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee . . . and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." No events

transpire after this. The Lord is present among His people; the place of His feet is glorious. His people are all righteous, and shall inherit the earth for ever. It is, therefore, not wise or reasonable to look for any harmony between the prophet's construction and history, so far as it has yet gone. What we find is conceptions, of which many have been, and others may yet be, fulfilled in history. The prophet paints a Christian picture, but he sets it in an Old Testament frame; though the frame—too narrow for the picture, as it seems to us—is of exquisite beauty, and the work of a most skilful, religious hand.

We ought not, I maintain, to look for any great development or progress in the prophecy, much less cut it into sections either of nine or any other number of chapters. It is a composition in which certain conceptions appear throughout,—one theme which has many variations executed upon it. This only may be held, that in the chapters from the 49th onward the prophet conceives more profoundly than before the moral condition of Israel, and sets more clearly before himself and the people the problem of sin, and the means whereby it is atoned, and the restoration of the people made possible thereby. Yet if we look at the prophet's position, or, at least, at the situation where he conceived himself to be, just before Israel's final restoration, now imminent,—for her warfare is accomplished and her iniquity paid off,—we must acknowledge that the sufferings of the Servant lie behind him. In truth, the whole of Israel's history lies behind him, and nothing lies before him but her restoration to, and final felicity in, the presence of her God.

Israel's history, with all its meaning through the long ages, her sufferings and afflictions,—"often have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel say,"—the contempt endured from the nations, the abasement, the sin, and yet the moral glory never extinguished,—as it could not be among the people of the Lord,—the faith, the heroism, the light from God,—all

this lies behind the prophet and under his eye. And these profound chapters—49, 52–53, and the like—give us his reading of the meaning of this history. Those conceptions of sin—of sin borne and of sin atoned, paid off by being borne—are not ideas suggested by Israel's history. They are ideas taught by its history; they are ideas drawn from its history; they are the moral interpretation, the religious philosophy of its history. Whether we regard them as predictions of things to come, or generalisations from a history conceived as past, is of extremely little consequence. The history of Israel teaches them. And the prophet takes his position at the end of this history, at a point immediately preceding Israel's restoration and final felicity, when the whole field of its history, with its profound moral meaning, lies open to his gaze, but behind him, a thing transacted and past.

Now, the theme of Deutero-Isaiah is the universal kingdom of the one universal God—Jehovah, God of Israel,—a kingdom whose coming is imminent. Unquestionably, his horizon is bounded by the restoration from exile. Between the prophet and that event there are distinct occurrences, great steps towards the event; after it, no occurrences take place. The restoration is the initiation of the perfect kingdom of God: Jehovah feeds His flock like a shepherd: His glory is revealed, and all flesh see it together. Even the occurrences that lie between him and this event the prophet invests with an ideal grandeur; but after this event he becomes wholly ideal. He operates with religious conceptions alone. Out of these he constructs the kingdom of God in its final form.[1]

The phenomena and forces which filled and made up the prophet's world are familiar to us. They were Jehovah, God alone, and the false gods; the people of God in bondage to Babylon, the mighty world-empire, which was but an incarnation of its own idolatry; the irresistible career of Cyrus, and the universal prostration of the idol-worshipping nations

[1] Isa. 60–62.

before him. These are the forces out of whose conflict the universal kingdom of the Lord must arise. To many an eye the world might have seemed a chaos; and it did fill many of the prophet's contemporaries with despair. They shared in the alarm of the other nations at the advance of Cyrus, fearing he might but forge heavier chains for them than those that now bound them; and the Lord has to still their fears: "But thou, Israel, My servant, seed of Abraham My friend, fear not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I have chosen thee, and not cast thee off."[1] In the events transpiring around them, they could perceive no trace of the presence of their God; and to none of them did the arm of the Lord make itself apparent.[2] Querulousness and the captiousness of despair had taken possession of them; and the Lord had to reprove them: "Woe to him that striveth with his Maker! Shall the clay say to Him that fashioneth it, What makest Thou?"[3] They were wholly downcast and paralysed: "Why, when I am come, is there no man? When I call, is there none that answereth?"[4] Their God had forsaken them, and they trembled before the fury of the oppressor.[5]

But though to many minds in Israel all might appear in confusion, to no prophet of the Lord could the world ever appear confusion. It was not confusion, though it might present a movement hard to see into. It was a divine drama that was being played, complicated and extended; and only a prophet of the Lord could foresee how it would develop itself. He could foresee, because to his mind the principal, or rather the only, actor in the drama was Jehovah Himself. And his foresight of it is little else than his conception of Jehovah,—of what He is and what His purposes are,—flung into the wrestling mass of principles and forces which he perceived around him. The conception of Jehovah as the

[1] Isa. 41^{8}. [2] Isa. 53^{1}. [3] Isa. 45^{9}.
[4] Isa. 51^{2}. [5] Isa. 51^{13}.

First and the Last—whose purpose is to plant a new heaven and found a new earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art My people—turns the confusion into order. Under the prophet's eye there begins to move, and there proceeds, step by step, the evolution which ushers in the universal kingdom of the Lord. This evolution has two sides, an outer and an inner; but the power moving and operating in both is Jehovah, the God of Israel. In the outer movement Jehovah's instrument is Cyrus; in the inner movement it is the Servant of the Lord.

To take the outer evolution first: This Cyrus, who was spreading consternation among the heathen, treading down kings, and making their swords like dust,[1] and exciting terror even in the breasts of the captives, was Jehovah's agent, whom He had raised up and called from the East, and who had come, obedient to His bidding.[2] Jehovah's raising up of Cyrus was not a mere display of power, or an act of vengeance, but a great operation within the sphere of His purpose of salvation. "I have raised him up in *righteousness;* he shall rebuild My city, and he shall let go My captives."[3] The prophet does not go beyond other prophets, when he expresses the conception that Cyrus was Jehovah's instrument, whom He made use of for effecting His purposes with His people; for, in the earlier chapters of Isaiah, the Assyrian is the rod of Jehovah's anger, a passive instrument in His hands; so passive that, when he presumed to have thoughts and purposes of his own, he was behaving as madly and monstrously as if the staff should lift itself up as if it were not wood.[4] And in Jeremiah the Lord speaks of the king of Babylon as 'Nebuchadnezzar My servant.'

But in two particulars this prophet goes beyond others: *first*, in the scope of the task which he assigns to Cyrus, and in the constructive character of this task; for his mission is twofold, one part of it being to crush the heathen world-power, and thereby abolish idolatry and open the way for the

[1] Isa. 41^{2}. [2] Isa. $41^{2.\ 25}$. [3] Isa. 44^{13}. [4] Isa. 10^{15}.

expansion of 'judgment' to the Gentiles; and the other being to set free the Lord's captives and build anew His temple, that the law might go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem: and, *second*, in the close intimacy with Jehovah Himself into which he brings the Persian hero, while the Assyrian and the Babylonian were mere instruments in Jehovah's hand, which He flung away, or broke in pieces like a rod, when His purpose with them was served. Cyrus is no mere instrument, he is the Lord's 'anointed' or Messiah, whose right hand He holds,[1] whom He loveth,[2] whom He goes before and prospers, whom He called by name when he did not know Him, and who shall even call upon His name.[3]

These last words suggest one of the most interesting questions which these prophecies raise,—the question, namely, what thoughts the prophet had of the religious position of Cyrus, what hopes he entertained of him, and whether he anticipated that the conqueror would realise that it was the God of Israel who was crowning his arms with victory, and that he might be won over to the religion of Jehovah. No thought was too lofty or too wide for the prophet in the passion of enthusiasm which the vision of a restored nation and a regenerated world raised within him. And, obviously, if such a thought occurred to him,—as it well might, seeing that the Persians were no worshippers of images,—it would facilitate, to his mind, the solution of the great problem which attracted his thoughts, how the nations could be gained over to the true faith, and the kingdoms of the nations become the kingdoms of the Lord. Such a great work, however, could not be accomplished by Cyrus, for this was the task assigned to another, who alone could accomplish it, the Servant of the Lord, who would bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. That work would be effected, not by conquest or strife, but by methods very different,—by the unwearied

[1] Isa. 45^{1}. [2] Isa. 48^{14}. [3] Isa. 41^{25}.

gentleness and sympathy of one "who would not cry nor lift up His voice, and who would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax." Yet how mighty an impulse the adhesion of Cyrus might give to such a work, whether by his example or his influence!

In this way, what may be called the external frame of the prophet's vision of the universal kingdom of the Lord was set up: "The idolatrous empire was laid low, the idols demonstrated to be vanity";[1] "those that served graven images were turned back and put to shame";[2] "the ransomed of the Lord restored to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads";[3] "and all Israel, every one on whom Jehovah's name was called as His people, saved with an everlasting salvation."[4] Such language is proof enough how ill-suited such a phrase as 'external frame' is to express the prophet's conception. The work of Cyrus was, in truth, the work of Jehovah; its whole meaning to the prophet lay in its being a religious work, a great stride taken by the kingdom of the Lord towards its full victory over all that was evil and false. Nothing could demonstrate how entirely the religious idea of it dominated the prophet's mind so much as his eagerness to bring Cyrus, the great agent who was accomplishing it, himself into true relations with Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, and God over all.

Now, it is true that this more external process is that with which the first nine chapters of the prophecy are specially occupied. But this external restoration of Israel reposes on the internal redemption and atonement of her sins, which is what makes it possible; and the prophet uniformly couples the two together. For example: "Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art My servant: I have formed thee; thou art My servant: I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins";[5] and

[1] Isa. 41^{29}. [2] Isa. 42^{17}. [3] Isa. 51^{11}.
[4] Isa. 45^{17}. [5] Isa. $44^{21ff.}$.

then follows the jubilation of nature over Israel's salvation, a jubilation that always follows her final salvation: "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob and glorified Himself in Israel." The same theme is handled in chaps. 40–48 as in the succeeding chapters, and it is handled in its full extent and breadth, embracing the complete redemption of Israel, both external and inward; but in chaps. 40–48 it is chiefly the external side that is dwelt upon; in chaps. 49–53 it is the more profound internal process, the redemption from sin. But this latter is prior to the other, and explains it: "Cry unto her that her warfare is over, that her iniquity is pardoned."

Such, then, is the internal side of the evolution needful to realise the universal kingdom of the Lord. The prophet's idea is complete: he has comprehended the problem in all its details. The work of Cyrus in the world only overthrows heathenism, and externally discredits and puts to shame the idols and the idolaters. This is but a negative effect. The nations are not thereby enlightened in the knowledge of the true God and His judgment. It is the mission of the Servant of the Lord to bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, and the isles shall wait for his law. Not to raise the question of the Servant here, whether he be Israel or no, when the prophet in chaps. 42 and 49 predicts that the Servant shall be the light of the Gentiles, and then in chap. 60, speaking of Israel restored, says: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come . . . and the Gentiles shall come to thy light." This shows that, at any rate, the light comes to the Gentiles only after Israel is redeemed and restored, and through Israel restored. Any direct missionary enterprises of individuals, however exalted, could not occur to the prophet. Like all prophets of the Old Testament, he operates with nations and peoples. And if the nations are to receive light through Israel, it will be through Israel again as an imposing

people before the world's eyes, when "the law goes forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

All this teaches clearly enough what the prophet has in view, when he speaks of the restoration of Israel. It is no mere return of a few, or even many, exiles from Babylon. It is the reconstruction of the people in its former integrity, and the realising in it of its ideal, as the bearer of God's revelation in the world. But this implies a great internal revolution in Israel itself, a complete regeneration, and a resurrection to life and gathering together, member to member, of all the fragments of the nation scattered in every land; a verification of the vision of another prophet, when he saw bone come to his bone, and the spirit enter into them, and they stood up a very great army.[1] It is in treating of this internal change in Israel itself that the prophet reveals his profoundest conceptions, conceptions hardly hinted at by other prophets, and bequeaths his richest legacy to the religious thought of mankind. The agent of the Lord in this work within Israel is the Servant of the Lord. This Servant of the Lord both bears the sins of the people, and turns their hearts unto their God,—he becomes a covenant of the people.

Now, in order to make quite plain the prophet's view of the future, I think it well, at the risk of some repetition, to formulate the following questions: Does the prophet conceive this restoration, about to be effected by Cyrus, as a perfect and final one, and the beginning of Israel's felicity, —the peace of the people of God? And, secondly, if so, how does the prophet come to take this large and ideal view of it, and give it this universal significance?

Now, I think it will be conceded that the brilliant conceptions of the prophet were not fulfilled in the actual historical Restoration, which took place with the permission of Cyrus. That meagre restitution of the exiles, and that

[1] Ezek. 37.

small beginning of a new Jerusalem and people, were very far from corresponding to the conceptions of the prophet. All interpreters agree on this; and some of them say that the prophet's great idea will yet be fully realised, and that literally, when the scattered Jews shall all be finally restored to their own land, while others say the prophet's conception shall yet be verified in all that is essential to its meaning, namely, in the universal conversion of God's ancient people to the faith of Christ and to the covenant of their God. This difference of opinion is a difference of interpretation; but all agree that the prophet's conception is that of a perfect and universal restoration of the people, which is the beginning of their entrance into the rest of God. Now, of course, the prophet does not speak of two restorations, one under Cyrus and another later; to him there is one restoration, that of Cyrus; but he gives it universal magnitude, making it complete and final.

Now, there is a principle here, which, so to speak, compels the prophet to conceive things thus, or at all events helps to explain why he did thus conceive things; why he did make the restoration universal, and, as we may say, of absolute meaning. Why was Israel, in exile, dispossessed of its inheritance, and scattered among all peoples? The prophet informs us, when he asks, "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers?"[1] and then answers his own question thus: "Did not the Lord, He against whom we had sinned, and in whose ways they would not walk, neither were they obedient to His law? Therefore are they a people robbed and spoiled, hid in prison houses; they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none sayeth, Restore!" The people were in exile because of their sins, of which the Exile was the chastisement. But if so, it is plain that they cannot be restored, until their sins are taken away. A restoration or relaxation of the penalty of sin sooner than

[1] Isa. 42^{24}.

the forgiveness of the sin would have been inconceivable to the prophet. Hence he proclaims to Jerusalem: "Her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity paid off, she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sin." Therefore the satisfaction for the people's sins and their forgiveness precede their restoration, as the prophet conceives it. Now, it may be that history takes down the massive construction of the prophet, and gives fulfilment to it not as a whole at once, but in successive parts. That is certainly the case; but it is his manner of thought that interests us meantime, and you will perceive that he moves among principles, and that his principles are of universal meaning, and receive, whenever he applies them, an absolute verification.

Now, under the influence of history, we should expect, as has been already pointed out, that the prophecy would contain, first, a prediction of the restoration from captivity in Babylon; secondly, a prophecy of the redemption of Israel from sin by the sufferings of the righteous servant at a time subsequent to the restoration from captivity; and, lastly, some glimpses of the final glory of the people of God. But this would be a disintegration of the perfect whole which the prophet constructs. The restoration which he predicts does not precede, but follows, the atonement of Israel's sin through the sufferings of the Servant. For if we really consider his mode of representation, we shall find this relation holding throughout the book: forgiveness of sin and restoration are always connected, and the restoration follows the forgiveness. Thus in the very exordium we are told that her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned. And in chap. 43^{25}: "I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake." Again, in chap. 45^{14}: "The labour of Egypt, and the merchandise of Ethiopia, men of stature, shall come unto thee; they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee." This is an account of the evangelising of the nations, and it is regarded as the immediate result of the

victories of Cyrus. And, only to mention one passage which indicates that the restoration of Israel is final, and leads to the joy of all nations: "Go ye forth of Babylon . . . utter it to the ends of the earth; say ye, The Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob." Again, as in these earlier chapters the redemption from Babylon is based on the forgiveness of the people's sin, so in the middle chapters the forgiveness of sin through the sufferings of the servant issues in the restoration from Babylon. For example, in chap. 49[st.] it is said to the servant: "I will make thee a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, to make inherit the desolate heritages; saying to them that are bound, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves."

In a word, what the prophet speaks about in these chapters is the final redemption of the people of God, and closely connected with that final redemption the salvation of all mankind; but he places these great events in his own day, and makes them the immediate result of the great occurrences taking place in his own time. The events and forces with which he deals are just those of his own period, the collision between Cyrus and Babylon, the liberation of the captives, and their restoration to their own land; but the prophet invests them all with a universal significance. He animates each of them with a moral or redemptive meaning, which makes them all stand out with a religious significance which is absolute. The whole situation has this universal meaning to him. The evils of the Captivity are the last evils of Israel for their sins; they are the evils of sin; deliverance from the Captivity is restoration from the condition of evil to the final state of blessedness; and the forgiveness of sins which precedes this, which *must* precede it to make it possible, is full and everlasting.

Within the empire of Babylon at this era, for Babylon was the world, all the moral forces that operate on the earth concentrate themselves; there they come into collision, and

there ensues the defeat of evil. It is a war of principles. The conflict of Israel, aided by Cyrus, with Babylon is the conflict of the religion of Jehovah with idolatry. With the downfall of Babylon, idolatry perishes. With the restoration of Israel, all the redemptive forces concentrated in Israel have free play, and begin to operate upon the world of mankind: she shines, and the Gentiles come to her light. Restoration is Israel's final redemption, and the event bounds the prophet's horizon. There are strictly no more events subsequent to this. The condition of the world is that so beautifully described in chap. 60: "The gates of Jerusalem stand open continually, day and night, that the forces of the Gentiles may be brought in and their kings in procession. The place of the Lord's feet is glorious. His glory is revealed, and all flesh see it together. His people are all righteous, and shall inherit the earth for ever."

It is acknowledged that this is the conception of the prophet, though the explanation of this way of conceiving things is not quite apparent. Delitzsch says: "It must not be forgotten that throughout these prophecies the breaking forth of salvation, not for Israel only but for all mankind, is regarded as bound up with the termination of the Captivity; and from this basis of the restoration of the people who were in exile it is never separated."[1] And again he says: "But, as we shall never be tired of repeating, these prophecies regarding the appearance of the Servant of the Lord, the Saviour of Israel and the heathen, as connected with the Captivity; the punishment of Israel terminating according to the perspective foreshortening of prophetic vision with the termination of the Captivity, and the final glory of Israel and the final salvation of mankind beginning to dawn on the border of the Captivity,"[2] *i.e.* coinciding with the restoration.

[1] Delitzsch's *Isaiah*, vol. ii. (T. & T. Clark's translation) p. 258.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 276.

Now the explanation of this mode of conception appears to be this:

1. The prophets were all men of their own time. They stand amidst the circumstances of human life and the conditions of the world surrounding them in their own day. It is these circumstances and forces that fill their pages, and that have significance to them.

2. But though the prophets are men of their own day and handle the forces of their own time, they are also men of the future. Though they live in their own time with an intensity of life to which nothing now is comparable, they do not lose themselves in the confusions of their day. They possess the key to the labyrinth in which other men hopelessly wander. This key is Jehovah and His purposes of redemption. The prophets appear usually amidst very great movements in the world. Great events were passing around them. In these great events about them they felt the presence of Jehovah. It was He that was animating all the events. And in these events, the noise of falling empires, the revolutions in society and the Church, they heard the sound of His goings. He was near, and His full presence would be speedily manifested. For if He was near, His redemption was near. The glory of the Lord would appear, and all flesh would see it together; for His coming would be the redemption of His people and of the world.

When we look back, from our point of view, at the events taking place around the prophet, we are apt to think less of them than he did. We speak of Israel as a type of God's people, and of Babylon as a type of the world and the like. But such ideas could not arise in the prophet's mind. Israel was the people of God, and Babylon was the world with its false worships, its cruel idolatries, and oppression of men. It is just because the things were of this magnitude to the prophet, that he speaks as he does. He moves, as we may say, among principles, true religion and false religion, Jehovah

and idolatry with their opposition, the people of God with their sin and suffering and forgiveness. It is the principles in all these that fill the prophet's mind, and which cause him to give to the events that absolute religious magnitude which they assume in his prophecy.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Servant of the Lord.

In any discussion of any point in the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, I take it for granted that the point of view of the whole series of prophecies is the Babylonian Exile. Also I take for granted that the great drama, which the prophecies exhibit, embraces at least the deliverance from Babylon, however much more, and that the relations of the people at this time supply all the colours for the splendid scenery. But, of course, there is here much more than mere political emancipation, for these two pecularities mark the Old Testament dispensation: *first*, that naked truth is not so much taught there as in the New; truth being as a rule expressed in some external form, as rites, aspects of national life, victory or defeat, and the like; and, *second*, which is to say the same thing the other way, that thus all political and social and external movements on the face of the national life had also a religious meaning,—that is, not only symbolised religious truths, but were religious movements. The Exile, for example, was not merely a political movement, symbolising the taking away of the blessings given as a heritage of God, and Restoration another outward movement, symbolising a return to God and to the blessings of fellowship with Him; but these things, Exile and Restoration, were felt to be, and were in large degree, the very things which they symbolised. The spiritual truth and the material clothing of it were never disjoined. And just as the Exodus was not only a national

emancipation from bondage, which might symbolise a spiritual delivery from sin, but really was such a religious deliverance, brought about by the spirit of God, so the Exile was not only a national enslavement which might fitly symbolise, but also one which was, a spiritual bondage; and in like manner the Restoration not only symbolised, but was, the introduction into religious freedom.

Now this truth, fundamental to the Old Testament dispensation, explains these two things, namely, *first*, that the liberation from Babylon has always coupled with it liberation from sin: "her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned"; and, *second*, that these are not considered by the prophet two things, one of which takes place after the other, and independently of the other, and by other means than the other, but two sides of the same thing, both of which take place together. Certainly the order of thought is not this: first, release from Babylon through Cyrus; second, and after the first, release from sin through the suffering of the Servant of the Lord; but rather this, the Church and nation that is in captivity is in a double captivity to sin and Babylon, which is the punishment of sin. Its redemption, therefore, must also be twofold,—from Babylon and from sin: and the glory that shall follow is equally double,—restoration to Canaan and to God's presence there. Hence the prophet, standing before the redemption from Babylon and the restoration to Canaan, conceives both these things as complete and final. The redemption is absolute: "Her iniquity is pardoned, her warfare is accomplished"; and so is the restoration: "He shall lead His people like a flock. . . . Say to the cities of Judah: Behold your God."

This, then, being plain, we pass on to consider the question of the Servant of the Lord in these chapters. To the question: Who is the Servant of the Lord in these chapters of Isaiah? many answers have been given. But when these answers are compared together, a large

number of them are found to have more points of agreement with one another than of difference. They are found to coincide with one another so far, and diverge only at the end. Now this fact suggests that the inquiry ought rather to be, in the first instance, What is the Servant of the Lord? For, when it is found that there is agreement as to the characteristics of the Servant, as there generally is, when this question only is under discussion, the further question, Who then is the subject to whom these characteristics belong? is made greatly more simple. It is then found that the diversity of answers returned by students of the prophecy to this latter question arises from their taking it up in dissimilar senses, and making two quite different questions of it.

The majority of writers who are mainly interested in the religious side of Scripture and the redemptive truths which it contains, have conceived the question to be: In whom, then, in fact, have these characteristics of the Servant been united and realised? And they answer: In the Christian Messiah. On the other hand, when put by interpreters who are interested in the historical development of redemption, and who pursue the grammatical and historical method of interpretation, the question has been: To whom did the prophet in his own mind attribute these characteristics? To which question the answers have been somewhat various, such as,—the prophetic body, or one of the prophets; the Jewish people ideally conceived, or as true to its ideal; or those of the Jewish people true to its ideal. It is plain, however, that these two questions are quite distinct, and therefore that answers returned to them, though also quite distinct, may be perfectly consistent with one another.

No doubt either party may hold that the question, as put by the other, is irrelevant. The theologians may say: It can be of no consequence to us, Christians and believers in inspiration, what subject the prophet had in his own mind.

And the critics may say: Our function is simply to discover what the prophet intended, for the meaning of any composition is what its author meant by it. But it is only the unwise of both parties who speak in such a way. No theologian can afford, when interpreting Scripture, to put out of his view what he may call the human author. And there is not one of the better class of critics who does not recognise the pertinence of the question, In whom are the features of the Servant to be recognised? or who does not give the same answer to the question as the orthodox theologians. In an essay on the 53rd of Isaiah, printed from Bleek's posthumous papers in the *Studien und Kritiken* of 1861, this sentence occurs:

"What the prophet here says as yet in general, in reference to the Servant as such, as it were *in abstracto*, has received its complete fulfilment in the One, who was the only holy and perfectly sinless among the human race, and therefore the only one whose sufferings had such a character that, not being due to His own individual transgression in any way, they can only be regarded as serving for the atonement of the sins of men."

A true answer to the question, Who is the Servant? must be consistent, on the one hand, with the conditions of the prophecy, and, on the other, with the statements of the New Testament. The conditions of the prophecy, such as its place in the Exile and the like, have been already seen. The New Testament applies much of what is said of the Servant to Christ. Our theory of the Servant must be such as in fairness to admit of this. But the prophecy may be fairly applied to Him, if it be a Messianic prophecy of any of the kinds formerly described. That is, it may be, *first*, directly Messianic, *i.e.*, may refer in the prophet's own mind to the Messiah, whether it correspond exactly to the Messiah's history, or describe Him more in colours drawn from Old Testament relations; or, *second*, it

may be a typical Messianic prophecy, *i.e.* one not spoken by the prophet with conscious reference to the Messiah, but with a reference in his own mind to something in the Old Testament which was imperfectly that which the Messiah was perfectly in the New when He came, *e.g.* a prophet, or the prophetic function or office, or Israel as the light of the world, the bearer of God's revelation, and such like. And of this indirect Messianic there may be two kinds, the ideal and the ordinary,—the ideal, in which the prophet, though referring consciously to the Old Testament thing, yet speaks of it ideally, according to its perfect state rather than according to its empirical condition as realised in the Old; or ordinary, *i.e.* in which he speaks of it as it then was. And, of course, in so long a series of chapters as this, it is conceivable that some passages might be ideal, and some ordinary, though the same subject were alluded to in both.

The Messianic in these last chapters of Isaiah runs in two lines, the same two lines in which it runs throughout the Old Testament generally. For example, the New Testament, which is the authoritative expounder of the Messianic of the Old, applies the things said of God's return to Israel in chap. 40^3 to Christ. The passage, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," is referred to the Messiah in the Gospels, no doubt after a special turn had been given to it by the prophet Malachi. The words, "And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together," are taken up in many ways in the New Testament, and said of Christ: "He manifested forth His glory"; "We beheld His glory." This is the divine side, the perfect manifestation of God among men, the union of God with man. This line runs through the whole Old Testament. The incarnation is but the culmination of the theophanies, of God's personal appearance, we cannot say how, to Adam and Moses; in His manifestation of Himself in the Angel of the covenant, and the

Angel of His face, and the like. These things were all temporary manifestations of God on earth, dwellings of God among men, foreshadowing a perfect incarnation and a permanent indwelling.

Thus all these passages which speak of God in manifestation, of God's glory being revealed, of His feeding His people, and dwelling among them, the New Testament uses of Christ, who is God manifest. In this way the Epistle to the Hebrews also applies the 102nd Psalm to Him: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, didst lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands." The Old Testament writer had not in his mind a distinction of persons in the Godhead when writing this, but he had in his mind certain operations and self-manifestations of God. A further revelation is enabled to say: "It is God the Son whose works these are; God becomes manifest in Christ." These passages are not predictions of the Son as distinct from the Father, they are predictions regarding God which history and subsequent revelation have shown to be true of God as manifest in the Son. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews does not adduce them as proof-texts, he stands with history behind him, with the life of Christ transacted, and with a consciousness filled with all that he was believed and known to be, and he interprets these passages said of God, and finds them fulfilled in the Son.

But, again, there is a second stream of Messianic also running through the Old Testament, and, of course, running very strongly in these chapters of Isaiah, consisting of elements arising from the human side. The former side consisted of various ways in which God came down among men, uniting Himself with them till He became man. This consists of various ways in which man rises up to God. Salvation is the union of man and God. That union is the point of meeting of two processes, God's coming down, and man's rising up. Now, all stages of

this elevation of man, and all instances of it, and all the means whereby it is accomplished, are Messianic, predictive of Christ, and applied to Him in the New Testament.

The most general instance of this elevation of man to union with God was the endowment of Israel with God's *Spirit*, which ruled Israel, and made Israel in its national capacity the Servant of the Lord; and the general stream of endowment parted into distinct channels which ran in the prophetic, priestly, and kingly orders. This endowment was Messianic in countless ways; through it Israel became son of God: "I called My son out of Egypt." In the Exodus, Israel was begotten, and became the firstborn; but this was a spiritual thing though also manifested outwardly. Through this same endowment the royal house of David—at least all who sat on the throne—were sons of God: "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to Me a son." The king was begotten son, when created theocratic king; but this creation was again a spiritual thing, though it had an external manifestation in the office. If the Old Testament is to be understood, it must be regarded as a real substantial kingdom of God, and everything in connection with it must also be regarded as real.

Let us therefore now inquire how Isaiah uses the term 'Servant.' And, first, we come to the passage, chap. $41^{8ff.}$:

> "But thou, Israel My servant,
> Jacob whom I have chosen,
> The seed of Abraham my friend.
> Thou whom I took hold of from the ends of the earth
> And called from the corners thereof,
> And said to thee, Thou art My servant;
> I have chosen thee, and not rejected thee.
> Fear not; for I am with thee:
> Be not dismayed; for I am thy God."

This is the first occasion on which the prophet uses the term 'servant,' and it is but fair to suppose that we have here the key to his usage of the expression throughout. What, then, are the ideas connected with the servant? and who is said to be servant? The ideas are: (1) The servant became so by the *choice*, the election of God: "Whom I have chosen; I have chosen thee, and not rejected thee."[1] (2) The servant is Israel, Jacob, seed of Abraham. (3) The servant became so, when taken hold of from the ends of the earth, and when called from the corners of it. The elements, so to speak, out of which the servant was formed were Israel, Jacob, seed of Abraham; but it was the taking hold of him, which is elsewhere called the creating of him, the forming of him from the womb, and the like, that raised him into the position of servant. (4) It seems implied in the address that Israel was conscious of being servant: "I said to thee, Thou art My servant." Then follows an assurance that God will stand by His servant and help him, and give him victory over all his enemies, and remove all obstacles that lie in his way: "Fear not; I am with thee. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded. Fear not, thou worm Jacob; behold, I make thee a new sharp thrashing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains . . . and beat them small . . . and the wind shall carry them away."[2] Nothing is said here as to the office of the servant, or his duties. We might infer something from the term 'servant.' We might also say that the mission of the servant will be identical with that of the seed of Abraham, or with that of Abraham. But it is preferable to leave inferences alone, and pass on to other passages which add new elements to our knowledge of the servant. The points gained, then, are these, that Israel, Jacob, the seed of Abraham, is the servant;

[1] Isa. $41^{8a. 9b}$. [2] Isa. $41^{14f.}$.

that God's election, and His calling them into national existence, constituted Israel servant; and that Israel was conscious of being servant. It is needless to adduce additional statements in confirmation of these positions; these chapters are filled with passages that leave no room to doubt that the nation Israel, as nation, is servant of the Lord.

Now, before passing on, I may observe how peculiar a subject this is, and how susceptible it is of a great variety of predicates and descriptive epithets being applied to it. The prophet might speak of Israel the servant, under this name, as it then was when he contemplated it, sinful, despondent, unskilled to detect the working and presence of God in the events then occurring: "Who is blind, but My servant? or deaf, as My messenger whom I send?"[1] "Remember these things, O Jacob; for thou art My servant . . . I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy trangressions."[2] Or, on the other hand, seeing such conditions of Israel are manifestly not the true condition of one who is servant of the Lord, the prophet might speak of Israel the servant ideally, as realising in itself all the features of the true servant, the very divine thought and purpose with it, though it was, in truth, far enough from doing this. We must not forthwith conclude that ideal descriptions of the Servant cannot be applied to Israel, because Israel in fact may not correspond to them. Israel as yet had never been true to its ideal, but it had an ideal nevertheless. And it is certainly the prophet's view that now, when restored, this ideal was going to be realised by Israel.

The next passage of importance in the development of the idea of the Servant is that in chap. $42^{1ff.}$, which runs as follows:

"Behold My servant, whom I hold fast:
My chosen, in whom My soul is pleased:

[1] Isa. 42^{19}. [2] Isa. 44^{21}

I will put My spirit upon him:
He will bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.
He will not cry, nor lift up his voice,
Nor make his voice be heard in the street.
The broken reed he will not break,
Nor quench the glimmering light:
He will bring forth judgment in truth.
He shall not fail nor be discouraged,
Till he have set judgment in the earth:
And the isles shall wait for his teaching."

This very instructive passage adds some essential elements to the idea of the Servant. (1) It indicates what his great function is: To bring forth *judgment*, *i.e.* practical religion, right acting, to the Gentiles. Judgment is the practice which has 'righteousness' (צֶדֶק or צְדָקָה) for its principle. Bringing forth judgment implies bringing forth righteousness. The representation is that he shall instruct the Gentiles, for they are said to wait upon his *law* (תּוֹרָה) or teaching. The representation is similar to that in chap. 2^3: "He will teach us of his ways: for out of Zion shall go forth teaching, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." This teaching seems elsewhere called 'light': "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (2) The method to be adopted by the Servant in performing his great function,—the method of meekness and peace, not violence or force: "He shall not cry, nor lift up his voice; the bruised reed he shall not break." And, (3) which is hardly a distinct thing, his unwearied devotion to his calling, and his success: "He shall not fail, till he have set judgment in the earth." And (4) his endowment for this great office: "I will put My spirit upon him." I consider the word נָתַתִּי (perf.) to have the present or future meaning so usual in that verb, and not to refer to the past.

Now, if we inquire who is the Servant in this passage,

there is nothing, so far as appears, to hinder its application to Israel. For, *first*, the passage cited from chap. 2^3: "For out of Zion shall go forth teaching," contains a parallel idea. *Second*, many of the predicates of the servant here are the same as those of Israel in the former passage, $41^{8ff.}$; for example: "I hold thee fast with the right hand of My righteousness,"[1] of the people; here, "My servant, whom I hold fast."[2] Again: "Thou Israel my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen,"[3] of the people; here: "Behold My servant, My chosen, in whom My soul is well pleased."[4] In addition, the term 'servant' is used in both places. Further, it is here said: "I will put My spirit upon him"; and elsewhere it is said: "Hear, O Jacob My servant; and Israel whom I have chosen: I will pour My spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thy offspring."[5] The passage may thus describe Israel, the servant, whose great service consists in bringing forth judgment to the Gentiles, in the condition in which now at last, when restored, he is to enter upon his great mission, his method of pursuing it, and the certain result of it.

The term 'servant' of Jehovah is, of course, used in a general sense in Scripture, *e.g.* of Job, My servant Job, of David, and of the prophets in general. But its use in this book is special, and in a sense upon which the other general ideas of the book cast light.

The fundamental idea of the prophet is the absolute Deity of Jehovah: He is the only God, beside Him there is none. The struggle that is going on is between true Jehovah worship and idolatry. This struggle is a decisive one; it is being fought out. The knowledge of Jehovah—not as abstractly God alone, but as God such as He is—is the salvation of the world. This is now what the prophet conceives Jehovah as bringing near. This is His work,

[1] Isa. 41^{10}. [2] Isa. 42^1. [3] Isa. 41^8.
[4] Isa. 42^1. [5] Isa. 44^{1-3}.

His purpose. As performing this work, He is צַדִּיק, He is righteous and a Saviour. The element or sphere within which He moves in doing all His work is צֶדֶק righteousness. Hence it is only after Jehovah had been seen in His true Godhead that His servant is introduced in chap. 42. Now, in this which Jehovah is doing He has a *servant*. The servant is His instrument in effecting His great work. The work being to make known Himself, to make Him recognised as God alone, God in truth; the servant must himself be in possession of this truth, penetrated by it, inspired by it. And the work of the servant is to bring forth this truth to the Gentiles—to bring forth judgment to the Gentiles—to be the light of the Gentiles.

Jehovah's servant possessed of this truth itself, inspired by it, exhibiting this light of the true religion, is Israel; and its task, as servant, is to bring it forth to the Gentiles, to the world, that the isles may wait for its instruction. This is the idea of the servant of the Lord in general; and this is the work of the Lord which he is performing,—His plan, within the frame of which all that He is now Himself doing is done, and which is the task of the Servant, as His servant, to perform.

Now, it is evident from innumerable passages of this prophet, that Israel is called by him the servant of the Lord; that is, Israel under certain conceptions, namely, as elect of Jehovah, as created and formed by Him, as endowed with His spirit, or as having His prophetic word or revelation in its mouth, and as serving the Lord's universal purpose of salvation with the world; it is Israel under these conceptions that is the Lord's servant. It is really these divine characteristics of Israel, as they may be called, particularly the word of Jehovah being in it.

When we compare chaps. 42 and 49, there are two points to which allusion needs to be made. First, in both there is brought to light a distinction drawn by the prophet between

the servant and Israel. The servant is not all Israel. On this point two statements will suffice. First, the function of this servant is to restore the tribes of Israel; to be a covenant of the people, that is, to be the medium of bringing the people again into covenant with God, or rather, as the covenant had never been broken, as is so often in these chapters affirmed, the medium through which the whole people should realise the blessings of the covenant: "I will form thee, and make thee a covenant of the people,"—where עם must be Israel. "It is a small thing for thee to be My servant in restoring the tribes of Israel." There is thus a distinction.

The servant is not all Israel. His function is to restore Israel. The tribes of Israel here may be the outlying fragments of Israel,—the tribes of the Northern kingdom; it is all the scattered members of the dispersion everywhere. The servant, therefore, is not all Israel actually. But, on the other hand, the servant, even in this limited sense, is still called Israel, *e.g.* chap. 49^3: "Thou art My servant, thou art Israel in whom I will glorify Myself." And again, 51^{16}, in words exactly resembling those said to the servant in chap. 49, Israel is addressed: "I have put My words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand, to plant a heaven and found an earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art My people." Thus the servant, even in the limited sense, is still Israel. The size, so to speak, does not interfere with the realising of the idea. That element in Israel, or those elements in Israel which realise the idea of Israel, are still a unity, an ideal to the prophet, which he calls the servant. One of the main peculiarities of this ideal unity is the endowment of it with the prophetic gift, with the spirit of God as the spirit of revelation. Thus it becomes the light of the Gentiles. But the prophet holds fast to the ideal unity, Israel.

But, second, this introduces the fresh point which

chaps. 42 and 49 raise, namely, the suffering of the servant. This is implied in chap. 42: "He shall not fail nor be broken, till he set judgment in the earth." Again, even more fully in chap. 49: "I said, I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought." And more distinctly: "Thus saith the Lord to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and stand up, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel who hath chosen thee." And, of course, most fully in chap. 53.

Now, as the prophets were practical teachers, they all occupy themselves with the life of the people, as it comes before them. The people are the people of God. The people of God does not consist of a series or number of units; it is an organised body, a unity, a people in the strict sense. Hence the prophets direct their attention mainly to the life of the nation as this collective people of God. The conduct of individuals is less alluded to, in so far as it concerns these individuals themselves; it is of interest only as it is symptomatic of the general condition of the people, or as it affects or reacts upon this. The prophets are statesmen in the kingdom of God. It is the idea of this that fills their minds; it is the conception of what this kingdom is that inspires them; and all their efforts are directed, in the particular circumstances of each of them, towards realising this conception.

Hence they have little occasion to go back to first principles, or raise questions about the origin of evil or the nature of evil, or how the individual man is connected with the whole, and on what principle it is that each member of a sinful race comes into existence, affected with the malady of the race. And as little occasion have they to grope about for a standard of morality. They stand, on the one hand, on facts of experience; and, on the other, within a constitution or kingdom of God, the principles of which are far from

obscure; for God hath not spoken in a dark place of the earth secretly; He hath not bidden the seed of Jacob seek His face in indeterminate conditions; He speaks right, and in clearness. The Scriptures of the prophetic age teach that each individual man is a sinner; and this is but in each case an instance of the general fact that all men are sinners. The individual is sinful in conformity with the larger fact that the family, or the people, or the race to which he belongs, is sinful. He descended of sinners, he dwells among sinners, or, on the largest scale, a clean cannot come out of an unclean.[1]

Naturally, what we have presented to us is facts. Abstract conceptions are not to be looked for. The moral principle of divine government, according to which individuals are born with an inherited bias to evil, for which they are responsible, or which inevitably issues in actual deeds of evil, for which they are responsible, is not reflected on. Much less is there any reflection on this bias or propension of the nature itself. The conception of what we call a 'human nature,' participated in by the individual, and conditioning the individual, being anterior to his personal and conscious acts, is hardly to be expected. There is perhaps no reflection on the individual's condition prior to his own acts. Nevertheless, the individual is not a unit nor treated as such. The family is a unity, and so is the people, and so is mankind; and in God's treatment the individual is involved with the larger mass, both for good and evil. But the principle of moral government according to which this happens is not reflected on; that is, this principle of treatment of the individual is not brought into relation to the individual's rights directly. He suffers along with the guilty the penalty of sins of which he was not personally guilty, and in like manner he is beloved for the father's sake. No doubt the later prophets do begin to reflect on this point.

[1] Job 14^4.

The personal life of the individual, and the direct relations in which he stands to God, apart from his relations to Him as a mere member of the people, though less alluded to by the prophetic teachers as leaders of the people in its public relations to God, must always have been of much importance. This inner individual life we see reflected in the Psalms and other more personal compositions. But only when the State began to break up, and the public unity of the people to be dissolved and their relation to God in that aspect to lose its meaning, do the prophets turn their attention to the relation of the individual to God. Probably Isaiah formed the conception of a nucleus of true adherents of Jehovah apart from the public form of national life. He sealed up the testimony among his disciples. He formed a Church of faithful men, he and his children, looking to the future. To him, the theocratic form had become a husk. But it is distinctively Jeremiah who is the creator of the individual, and who rises to those conceptions of a covenant with God, which the individual must form.

Hence in the new covenant the law is written on the individual's heart; one man no more teaches another. Prophets and priests disappear; the old machinery of the people's life is antiquated; the old conceptions still remain,—they could not but remain,—of grace and faith and free forgiveness and the like, but they are now applied directly to the single person. And that positive conception of Jeremiah, another prophet of his age sets in a negative and antithetic position to the conception formerly prevailing: "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord, ye shall not have occasion to use that proverb any more in Israel. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the person that sinneth, he shall die."[1]

[1] Ezek. 18^{2-4}.

Perhaps it was the strongly subjective character of Jeremiah's own mind that helped him to this conception. No man was ever the subject of his own reflections more than he was. He was to himself the standard in everything; the profound truthfulness and sincerity of his own nature was in that age almost the only standard he had. He was conscious of being a true prophet of the Lord, and from his own convictions and aims and feelings in that capacity he formed his conceptions of what religion was. He was isolated. The organic body of the theocracy had become indurated, and the life of God could no longer find a channel in it; it was withered and falling to pieces. Here and there only an individual likeminded with himself was found. But a false spirit had taken possession of the forms of public life, and expressed itself through them. And therefore a reconstruction must take place, and in an opposite manner from what formerly prevailed. The true life of God would not descend from the general to the individual, but manifest itself first in the individual, and through the energy of the individual spread like leaven through the whole lump.

In this age a great upheaval from below took place. There must always have existed this latent life of God among the individuals of the people, but in the earlier writings it finds less expression. We have a splendid literature and great religious categories, if I can so say, of the unity of God, grace, faith, and such like. But it is, as presented in the older literature, rather the framework of a Church, both in life and thought. Now the frame of the State was being shattered, and the life itself, as a life of the individual soul, not, of course, isolated, but in unity with others, yet the bond of unity, not any external organism, but just this very life itself, with its sympathies and its common convictions,—this life becomes the phenomenon and the power in Israel. And this makes the prophecies and Psalms of the Exile, such as Jeremiah and the second half of

Isaiah, theologically the profoundest part of the Old Testament, and the authors of this age the true heralds of the new dispensation.

The question of sin naturally raises that of reconciliation and forgiveness. This is one of the most difficult and extensive of questions, and can be discussed here only in relation to the development of prophetic teaching.

1. We must always start from the actual relation of the people in covenant with the Lord. This is always presupposed. This relation is one of grace on God's part; but this grace has been manifested. Such terms as covenant and grace are technical and familiar, and there is always a danger, in using such words, that we may not have very definite ideas. But such words imply that God is the only source of all moral and spiritual good to men, that only by a power or influence that comes out from Him can men become like Him in mind and heart, which is man's highest good; that nothing exists to induce God to communicate such influence to men, or so to put Himself in fellowship with them, that by sympathy and love to Him they may attain this condition,—nothing but just His goodness; and that, in fact, He has in this way entered into fellowship with them, and is disciplining them, and persuading them, by the exhibition of His love to them, to love Him, and thus attain to be likeminded with Him. This state of things, then, is assumed to exist. But the people in this relation are not considered sinless. They err, and are out of the way, and are compassed about with infirmities. But for these a means of absolution is provided in the sacrificial system. All sins of infirmity might be atoned for, whether incurred through passion or selfishness or force of circumstances,—all sins, provided they were not done in direct rebellion against the covenant,—that is, in denial of the principle of grace itself. The fundamental conception, the first principle, was that God was gracious: His name was the Lord merciful and gracious, slow to wrath, plenteous

in mercy. Who is a God like unto Thee? pardoning iniquity and, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blotting out my transgressions.

No doubt, in some cases of flagrant transgression against the laws of social well-being, the exigencies of mere civil life required the death of the sinner. But ordinarily, for the individual, absolution was given through sacrifice. It is a difficult question to settle what was the fundamental idea of sacrifice. Was it a gift to God, a gift indicating on man's side the sincerity of his mind, his readiness to sacrifice all to Jehovah, coupled with the devout desire that God would be pleased to accept him, and an expression of this desire? I cannot go into this question. The point which I wish to touch is another, namely this, whatever was or was believed to be the principle of atonement, that which atoned was the life of a creature offered unto God; and, like the covenant itself, this means of atonement was provided by God Himself. God's favour was not purchased by a gift from the sinner; He Himself indicated the means: "The life of the flesh is the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls."[1] The point here is that, waiving all questions of what atonement strictly is, or how blood, *i.e.* life, atones, the atonement is provided by God Himself; it is ultimately but His grace manifesting itself. Through whatever means sin is forgiven, forgiveness comes directly from God, and He provides the means for it. The important point is really not the means, but the gracious relation of God to the sinner. This is the case of the individual, and it forms the natural transition to the somewhat wider view of the prophets.

2. The prophets deal not with the individual, but with the people; and they refer little to the provisions made for the individual's restitution to the benefits of the covenant; nor do they refer much to ritual at all, except in a disparaging

[1] Lev. 17^{11}.

way. Besides the means of atonement for individual transgressions, there were the national feasts, where sacrifices were offered for the sins of the whole people. The references of the prophets to these are not favourable. And this has been always felt to be a point of difficulty. If we consider the position of the prophets whose writings we have, the difficulty may be alleviated somewhat. At the time they appeared, this state of things existed: There was a diligent observance by the people of outward ritual; while, at the same time, in idolatry and calf worship and immorality there was practical and fundamental infraction of the principles of the covenant. The ritual was half or, sometimes, wholly paganised. It was the chief medium for expressing the false religious conceptions of the people. Further, there was radical misconception of its meaning. Being of the nature of a gift to God, the idea naturally invaded the people's minds that in their offerings they did God a service of worth in itself; that He derived pleasure or good from the offering,—an idea ridiculed in Ps. 50: "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: the cattle on a thousand hills are Mine,"—and that the sacrifice was the cause of the forgiveness of sin by its own worth as an offering to God.

The sacrifices, as practised, had become the means of obscuring the very idea which lay at their foundation, when practised by pious men adhering to the principles of the covenant. Forgiveness became earned,—it was due from God. Now it is here that the prophets step in, to rescue the fundamental conception of the covenant, namely, that forgiveness of sin is of God's goodness. It is inconceivable that they should wage any war against sacrifice in itself. That which Moses and all the judges practised, which Samuel, and Elijah, and David, and Solomon, and the godly kings of the house of Judah after them, engaged in, could hardly in itself be assailed by prophetic men. It was the perversion of the institution, the inconsistency and superficiality of those en-

gaging in it, the fundamental subversion of the idea of it as a means of keeping within the covenant fellowship those whose general attitude to the covenant was upright, when practised by men whose iniquities were a direct rebellion against the covenant,—it was these things that they rebuked. As Isaiah says: "Iniquity and the solemn assembly, I cannot away with."[1] Hence they sought to bring men back to the true source of forgiveness and to the true conditions of it,—a broken and a contrite heart. Whatever the sacrifice was, it had no worth in itself before God. It was of worth if it symbolised true self-surrender and penitence; or it might be a symbol of a worthier sacrifice to come; at all events, it was not for its sake, but for His name's sake, that God blotted out transgression.

No doubt the circumstances of their day forced upon the prophets a loftier conception than even the true idea of the ritual could teach. That idea was that within the covenant God was gracious; that all sins except wilful rejection of the covenant idea itself were pardonable. The actual rejection of the covenant by the people enlarged the prophetic vision, and they rose to the extraordinary height of being assured that not even wilful infraction of the covenant by the people could turn away the favour of God for them; their unbelief could not make His faithfulness of none effect. They were thrown back upon the nature of God Himself. Of course, too, the rejection of the covenant by the people was never universal. There was always a remnant that were faithful; and for their sakes God continued gracious to the whole people, and for the memory of what their fathers had been: "I will defend this city to save it for Mine own sake, and for My servant David's sake."[2] The people are the seed of Abraham His friend. And though He chasten them, He will not cast them off: like a tree, which when cut down retains the stock of a new growth, the holy seed is its stock.[3]

[1] Isa. 1^{13}. [2] Isa. 37^{35}. [3] Isa. 6^{13}.

In the earlier prophets, forgiveness is regarded simply as an act of God's mercy. Any mediation of it through an atonement is not presented. In Deutero-Isaiah the great step is taken to mediate the forgiveness of God,—to exhibit the means through which it is procured. Even in these chapters forgiveness is still an act of God's grace: "I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake." But the prophet goes further. The sufferings of the Exile have suggested more-developed thoughts. No doubt the sufferings of the people at all times were for their iniquities. In a sense they bore in sufferings the penalty of their sins. God's favour did not return altogether in a way unmediated. The people had the sense of sin brought home to them (see the history of the Judges), they were penitent, and God's anger turned away. He held the penalty sufficient. This idea is also found in this prophet in his general statement in chap. 40: "Her guilt is paid off; she has received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins." Here Jerusalem or Israel is spoken of as a whole—My people; it has borne the penalty; the penalty has been held by grace to be sufficient, even doubly sufficient.

But the prophet does not abide by this general conception of former prophets; he makes an advance upon it. This bearing of the people's sin falls on some other than the guilty. The innocent Servant bears it. Even here, however, it is still Jehovah who is the Author of the forgiveness. For this way of forgiveness was His work: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, to put sickness on him."

There runs through the whole of chap. 53 the idea that the sufferings of the Servant were laid on him by Jehovah. They were more than those the people endured; even the people themselves thought them extraordinary, and looked on them as a special divine chastisement. In this they were right, but they were wrong in thinking the chastisement due to the actual sufferer; it was for their sins that he suffered. This

is an essential part of the prophet's conception. There is, of course, something figurative in his picture. He represents the sufferer as afflicted with sickness, as distorted by disease, as an object from which men turn away. But the meaning of this is, at least mainly, that the sufferings were the consequence of a special act of God in laying them on the Servant. He suffered among the people, but in a degree higher than they, and in a different way.

This representation, that God uses special means to atone for the sins of the people, and, secondly, that this special means was not employed on the whole people, but on another,—the penalty being shifted from the people, who yet enjoyed the benefits of redemption through the transfer: these ideas in this prophet are new. I do not mean that the idea of substitution is new, but the application of the idea actually to the case of the sinful people seems a new step.

There are other points very remarkable, especially this, that the prophet brings the sufferings of the Servant into connection with the sacrificial system. This may seem very natural to us. Yet other prophets do not so speak. This prophet has borrowed sacrificial phraseology: if his soul should make an offering for sin, or if Thou shouldst make his life an offering for sin (אָשָׁם). The prophet has taken the great step of lifting up the sacrificial idea out of the region of animal life into that of human life. This is a very remarkable thing in itself, when we consider that nowhere is any explanation given of the sacrifices; but perhaps, in spite of the fact that other prophets allude little to sacrifices except to disparage them, it may show what conceptions men who understood the sacrificial system and practised it rightly connected with it.

There may be difference of opinion on the question who, in the prophet's own mind, the suffering Servant was. There is, of course, no difference among Christians as to the person in whom, in point of fact, the things said have been fulfilled.

But it is of consequence to look at the thoughts of the prophet regarding the sin of his people apart from this question, and at his view of their history. His view is that their restoration cannot, or does not, take place, without their sin being borne by some human sufferer. Their history contains this necessity, and cannot reach its goal in their restitution without this. Whether this sufferer be an individual to the prophet, one sinless, realising in himself the idea of Israel in God's purposes with it and His endowment of it; or be the godly kernel of the people in Babylon, to whom the idea of the true Israel attached, the godly seed, the stock out of which the new nation was to spring,—this kernel idealised by the prophet as sinless, bearing the extremest hardships, despised and not esteemed, pierced and slain, yet reviving in the new nation, and by its knowledge making many righteous, and conceived as exhausting the divine chastisement on itself so that the people, in all its outlying fragments, is redeemed,—whatever view we take of this, the conceptions of the prophet are of the most remarkable character, and form the profoundest element which the Old Testament contributes to Christian thought on the subject of redemption.

3. Now, the idea of the chastisement of the people in God's anger is obviously a very complex one. Moreover, we must regard it as a process going on within the covenant relation. It is not for the destruction, but for the regeneration of the people. The present forms of the national life had become so corrupt and invaded by evil that they must be destroyed; but only in order that a fresh and purer nation should arise. To use Isaiah's figure, the tree must be cut down, though not uprooted, that out of its stock it may send forth new shoots. Or the figure of Amos, the people must be sifted in a sieve; but not one grain shall fall to the ground. Or Hosea's, the people must die and be buried; but after three days God will raise them up to a new life, an endless life, for death itself shall be destroyed.

Here, however, we have several points. First of all, the chastisements of the people, running through all their history and ending in the national dissolution, taught the people the connection between sin and suffering. For the order was invariable. The people sinned. Then the anger of God was kindled. Then He proceeded to chastise them. But the history taught also another thing. The chastisement was removed on repentance. At last God's anger passed away, and He returned to them in pity. There was a certain exhaustion of the divine wrath. The chastisement seemed to Him enough, or more than enough, in His returning compassion: "She has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins,"—her punishment is accepted. The end of chastisement had been fulfilled.

But this process, especially in its last phase, led to other conceptions. Inevitably the sins of the mass fell in their consequences upon the godly portion of the people. Though innocent of the evil, they bore the penalty of the sin. As one prophet says: "Our fathers sinned, and we have borne their iniquities." And it was not merely the common evils falling on all that the godly element bore. To them the evils were intensified in many ways, in feeling first of all,—a feeling which we hear expressed in the sorrows of the pious exiles, and their longing after Zion in the land of their captivity,—but also in hard reality. The untheocratic mass accommodated itself to the circumstances around it, and fell in with the idolatries and customs of the conquerors; but the kernel of the nation, true to their faith,—truer, perhaps, from their isolation, and in opposition to the degraded forms of worship now about them,—suffered oppressive hardships at the hands of their masters. "Their rulers make them to howl,"[1] says the prophet. And again: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheek to them that pull out the hair."[2] Thus, in

[1] Isa. 52^5. [2] Isa. 50^6.

a manner, the sins of others fell upon the faithful kernel of the nation.

Again, as the national unity involved the godly in evils due to the sinful portion of the nation, on the other hand, the faith and the patience of this pious kernel secured the restoration of the ungodly. The time of release came. The chastisement was exhausted, not on those who had deserved it, but on a generation innocent of their sins. The restoration effected through the patience and the faith of these exiles might be looked upon by the generation restored as due to the sufferings and the knowledge of God of the generation of the godly exiles. They had borne the chastisement of the nation's sins. How far such ideas are just, or how far the course of the people's experience and history was likely to suggest such thoughts, I need not stop to inquire, though I think it not unlikely that such thoughts would arise.

Having thus shown the general lines along which the actual history of Israel, as a people, would naturally cause the teaching of the prophets regarding the connection of sin, suffering, and redemption to develop, we are now in a position to give a full answer to the question already partly discussed, namely, What subject had this prophet present to his own mind, when speaking of the servant of Jehovah? Clearly, such a question may not only admit, but require, a different answer from the other question, In whom have the features of the servant been seen in fact? To this latter question the unanimous answer is, 'In the Christian Messiah.' To the former, various answers have been, and still are, returned; and perhaps unanimity in regard to it may never be attained. Still, we are bound to do our best to ascertain, from a careful consideration of all the data we possess, what is the most probable and reasonable answer; for this is the question which historical interpretation must put to itself, all the while that it holds the other two positions, namely, first,

that the things here said by the prophet of the servant of the Lord have in their general meaning been fulfilled in Christ, and the features drawn by the prophet are recognisable in Him; and, second, in accordance with our view of Scripture as something, however closely connected with the life and history of Israel, more than the utterance of any prophet,—as something caused to be spoken by One who saw the end from the beginning. In accordance with this view, it is also to be held that these thoughts of a sinless sufferer, one who might almost be called the word and operation of God incarnate in Israel, were revealed with a view to Christ,—were given out to prepare for Him in whom the thoughts were to be verified and the things indicated fulfilled. All this does not cause this question to have no meaning; but it places it on its proper footing.

Now, the opinion that the prophet, when speaking of the servant of the Lord, had in his mind the prophetic body, has little probability. It is based on the fact that the servant has the 'words' of Jehovah in his mouth, and is endowed with His spirit; but both things are said numberless times of the people, as in chap. 57^{16}: "I have put My words in thy mouth"; and chap. 44^{3}: "I will pour My spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring." And there is no reason why the prophetic body, to the exclusion of all other godly men, should be considered the people, and called Israel. And much less could any particular prophet be the servant of the Lord. Of course, such a title might be bestowed upon a prophet, but not in the sense in which it is used in chaps. 42–49, where it is said to the servant: "Thou art Israel, in whom I will be glorified." It is supposed by some that chaps. 52–53 were originally a funeral oration over some martyred prophet; but the arguments in favour of this view are not particularly strong. But even if this view were correct, the author of these prophecies has adapted the oration to his own purposes; and it is not its original use, but

its meaning as having a place in his prophecy and expressing his idea of the servant of the Lord, that we have to investigate.

Again, the view that the servant of the Lord is the spiritual Israel, those in Israel true to the conception of Israel, who may be supposed to be chiefly the godly kernel of the nation in Babylon, has its difficulties. It is exceedingly probable that in making the portrait of the servant, in chaps. 49 and 53, the prophet has drawn many of the traits and much of the colour from the sufferings and the faith of the godly exiles in Babylon, and particularly from the heroic faith and endurance of prophetic men. But it is probable that he did not confine himself to this period, but drew upon the history of the afflictions and labours of God's foremost servants in all ages. And it seems scarcely according to the prophet's manner of conception and way of expressing himself, that he should call even the pious remnant in Babylon—flower of the nation though they were—by the exclusive name of Israel, as in chap. 49: "Thou art My servant, Israel in whom I will be glorified." The tribes of Jacob still exist, the preserved of Israel are still part of Israel,—every one called by the name of Jehovah in all lands,—and it is most unlikely, this being his view, that he should denote any fragment of the nation in Babylon or elsewhere by the name of Israel and servant.

There remain, therefore, the two other hypotheses, either that the Servant is Israel according to its idea, or that he is a person whom the prophet foresaw as about to arise and realise in himself the conception of Israel, and cause it also to be realised in the people as a whole. That is to say, either the prophet has created out of the divine determinations imposed on Israel, election, creation and forming, endowment with the word or spirit of Jehovah, and the divine purpose in these operations, an ideal Being, an inner Israel in the heart of the phenomenal or actual

Israel, an indestructible Being, having these divine attributes or endowments, present in the outward Israel in all ages, powerful and effectual because really composed, if I can say so, of divine forces, who cannot fail of God's purpose, and who as an inner power within Israel by his operation causes all Israel to become a true servant; either this is the prophet's conception, or he foresees a real future individual who shall be in reality such a Being.

In regard to the theory that the servant of the Lord is a future individual—

1. It seems to me unnatural that the prophet should expand and contract his conception of the servant through three degrees; that he should spring back from the individual to the mass, as on this theory he does in chap. 42^{1}: "Behold My servant, whom I uphold: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles"; and then, in v.^{18}: "Who is blind, but My servant? or deaf, as My messenger whom I sent?" If the servant be an ideal Israel in Israel, a real being to the mind of the prophet, or a conception which is more than a conception, just as the Church is always more than an abstraction, then the passage from this ideal Israel to the actual Israel, deaf and blind, in v.^{18}, is easy and natural. And is it not somewhat unnatural that the prophet, looking forward to an individual, should call this individual Israel, as in 49^{3}: "Thou art Israel, in whom I will be glorified"? We may say nowadays that the characteristics of the true Israel have been realised in an individual; but that is not quite the same as calling an individual Israel.

2. It has also been argued that the descriptions in chaps. 42, 49, 53 are so distinctively individual, that they cannot possibly be considered to apply to a collective. I do not know that the argument is really very strong. A collective personified would, of course, be spoken of as a person. But the argument is valid only against those who think that the godly exiles in Babylon personified are the servant. I do

not think this idea can be sustained. The prophet is fond of abstractions, which he personifies and idealises. Thus he personifies Babylon as a captive maid in chap. 47; and he does the same with Jerusalem or Zion in numberless places, distinguishing her from her children,—that is, the abstract conception of the community, as distinct from the individuals which compose it, is personified and idealised. So Jacob or Israel is distinct from the members; Jacob or Israel, the abstract conception of the nation, personified, and distinguished from Israelites as individuals. Now the Servant of the Lord appears to me a similar abstraction, elevated by the singular idealisation of the prophet into a Being, and distinguished from the individuals or the tribes of Jacob, the fragments of the people in all lands. This Being does not belong to the Israel of any particular age, he is permanent.

An extremely important point is to keep separate those passages where the servant and the nations are contrasted (*e.g.* 42^{1-4} $52^{13ff.}$), and those where he and the people of Israel are contrasted. In the former the national idea always shines out. But much more would an ideal Being, an Israel within the outer Israel, an Israel which could not but always exist, though it was not to be identified with any section or even with any elements in the actual Israel, although, of course, some elements more truly represented it than others; much more would such a Being, created by the prophet's mind, though not merely a creation of his mind, be spoken of as a person. If we observe the descriptions, however, of the servant even in the passages which seem most personal, the national idea seems always to underlie them. When, for instance, in chap. 49^{7} it is said: "Thus saith the Redeemer of Israel to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth (better, whom nations abhor), to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall worship," —does not the phrase, servant of rulers, betray the national conception lying under the passage? and when it is said that

kings shall rise for reverence, it is to be remembered that kings are not individuals, so much as representatives of nationalities. And so in 52^{14} it is said that "as many were astonied at the marred visage of the servant: so shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him," —the many in both cases are the heathen nations,—and does not this imply a national conception again underlying the description of the servant?

And when in chap. 49 the servant comes before the nations, saying, "Listen, ye isles, unto me," and then expounds to them three successive stadia in his history or consciousness: first, his call at the beginning and his equipment: "The Lord called me from the womb . . . and He made my mouth like a sharp sword . . . and said unto me, Thou art My servant Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Second, the despondency of the servant: "But I said, I have laboured in vain . . ." And, third, the fulfilment of his mission, and God's purpose with him now at hand: "But now, saith the Lord to me, It is too light a thing that thou shouldst be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob: I will make thee the light of the Gentiles, that My salvation may be to the ends of the earth,"—is not this consciousness of the servant, which he here unfolds before the nations, but a reflection of Israel's history, its call, and God's purpose with it from of old; then the apparent failure of the purpose, in its sad calamities and apparent casting away; and, finally, the fulfilment of its mission, which to the prophet's mind is now imminent?

3. Another point is this, though it is perhaps not greatly to be insisted upon. In chap. 53 the servant of the Lord is represented as slain, and as rising again from the dead. If the prophet looked forward to a real individual, this, of course, must be taken literally. But is not this more than we should expect, from what we know of the Old Testament doctrine of immortality? If the language be used figuratively of the death of the nation, as other prophets speak, it is less

difficult. But perhaps not much weight is to be given to this.

4. More weight is due to this peculiar fact. If the servant be an individual, the leader and head of the people, who redeems them, and becomes their ruler,—that is, if the representation in the latter verses of chap. 53 be literally said of an individual: "I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,"—if this be literal, as is maintained, and not figurative, we should expect to find this leader and head over the people in some of those splendid passages, such as chap. 60, where the condition of Israel restored is spoken of.[1] But such a head nowhere appears. The people alone are the subject in all the pictures of the final condition of restored Israel. The servant has disappeared. The people are all servants of the Lord, and taught of God. Now, this is certainly remarkable, if the servant be an individual leader. But if he be an ideal Being, the hidden Israel in Israel, the divine creation within the people, who, in virtue of his being a combination, if I can say so, of divine forces, leavens Israel till it becomes that which he is, the servant of the Lord, it is natural. This Being loses his existence when the antithesis between him and the actual Israel ceases; he dissolves in the actual Israel, now, in each of its members, a servant of the Lord.

5. Not to multiply more points, I shall mention just one additional thing. The critical question has not, in general, much influence upon the exegesis. No doubt we must assume or admit, in order to understand the prophecy in any sense, that the prophet takes his position immediately before the restoration from exile; but whether this position be one ideally assumed or be his real historical position, the interpretation is not greatly affected. The critical question, however, has a certain bearing on the inquiry whether, in the prophet's

[1] In Isa. 9 and 11 the Messiah is just the most prominent figure in the picture of final salvation; but here the leader is absent.

estimation, the servant be an individual. If the position of the prophet, immediately before the Restoration, be his true historical position, then the servant of the Lord cannot have been to him an individual person. Because, as he regards the Restoration as the beginning of Israel's final felicity, after which no afflictions of Israel or of the servant are conceivable, the servant's sufferings must have lain behind him, as indeed the whole history of Israel lay behind him. But it is evident that no such individual as the servant had appeared in all the course of Israel's history. It is manifest, too, that certain traits in the servant's sufferings are borrowed from the sorrows of the Exile. But if the servant were an individual living during the Exile, the prophet must have been acquainted with him, which is altogether impossible.

On the other hand, if the author of these chapters were Isaiah, he might have looked forward to such a great individual and have placed his rise amidst the sorrows of the Exile, just as, in the earlier chapters, Immanuel appears to rise in the midst of the devastations caused by the Assyrian invasion. It might well be that the prophet should represent a person in the distant future as he does the servant, because, being future, he could attach ideal features to him; but no present, or past, historical individual could be so described by him. In this way the question of the actual date of the prophecies has a direct bearing on the question whether the servant was to the prophet's own mind an individual person or not. If the prophet really lived immediately or shortly before the Restoration, the servant can hardly have been regarded by him as a person; that is, if it be the case, as we have argued in the previous chapter, that he represents the perfect salvation of Israel and the evangelising of the world as immediately connected with the Restoration, already nigh at hand.

To my mind at least, seeing I believe that the prophet did live during the Exile, and that his mode of representation was to connect the final felicity of the people with the down-

fall of Babylon and idolatry and the immediately ensuing Restoration, the possibility of his regarding the servant of Jehovah as an individual appears to be absolutely precluded.

These are some of the difficulties which attach to the view that in the prophet's mind the servant was an individual; the difficulties in the way of the other theory are not so numerous. One difficulty which beset the former theory is not felt here. The movement through three degrees, the actual Israel, the spiritual Israel, and the individual, was certainly unnatural. On this other theory, there is only the simple movement from the actual to the ideal Israel. Probably the chief difficulty in the way of this second theory is to conceive it. Yet I do not think the difficulty is very great. We speak, for instance, of the Church, to which we attach certain ideal attributes; as for example it is elect, endowed with God's Spirit, has the presence of Christ, is pure, shall yet be universal, and be that in which the Lord shall be glorified. When we ourselves speak in this way, we do not have in view the actual Church anywhere, nor the Church as represented by any particular class of men in this or that age. And yet the Church is not an abstraction; it exists, and we should attribute qualities to it drawn from its history, its sufferings, and its faith. And we should say that it has a double task before it, not only to gather together its own scattered fragments and to animate them with a pure and perfect faith, but also to carry the truth to the nations who do not yet know it; a double function, which pretty much corresponds to the double office of the servant of the Lord, first, to the scattered fragments of his own race, to the Israelites; and, secondly, to the nations of the earth.

Thus, then, to sum up briefly what seems to me the prophet's conception of the Servant of the Lord—

1. He is, first, Israel under certain conceptions, chosen of the Lord and endowed with the knowledge of His word, and therefore His servant, His prophet, and messenger to the nations.

2. Then this conception, abstracted from the individuals in Israel, who were not true to it, is personified and treated by the prophet as a Being, a true divine creation. This is the servant Israel, always existing within the mass of individuals in Israel, a hidden man of the heart in Israel all through its history; for the divine grace and power which elected and endowed Israel could not fail to fulfil its purpose. This true Israel was at all times represented by Israelites. It was not a mere conception. The conception had embodiment in saints and prophets and martyrs for the truth. It testified and it suffered; it sank into despondency as if labouring in vain; and yet, in the saddest and darkest moments of its history, it set its face as a flint, knowing that He was near who should justify it. The servant in this sense is never contrasted with any other servant. There are not two servants. In opposition to this servant, there are the individuals or the tribes, or even the people considered as other men needing redemption. The description of the sufferings of this servant is given chiefly in chap. 53. The prophet may borrow from the circumstances of the Exile, its sorrows and trials and sufferings; but his picture is probably made up of traits from the whole history, things exemplified in individual men, prophets, confessors, and saints, all combined together to form the portrait of the ideal person, always existing in Israel, always distinguishable from Israelites.[1] In chap. 53 the individual aspect of the servant is much stronger than elsewhere. This was natural. Because here the servant is contrasted with Israelites and not with the heathen, and the national substratum so apparent in chap. 49 is less visible;

[1] This point, that the servant was never a mere idea, but represented at all times in prophets, etc., may be true. Yet it may be made a question whether the prophet's idea be not rather that Israel under its idea atoned for Israel under its actuality, *i.e.* all the history of Israel, its sufferings, calamities, etc., befell the servant, though he was free from its sins; and this history is laid to the account of the actual members, it has issued in their restoration. The servant is Israel, and yet not Israel.

but it appears to me to shine through chap. 52^{13-15}, where it is said kings shall shut their mouths before the servant. But it was quite natural that the prophet's ideal Being should become more and more individual in his hands, as he concentrated his mind upon it, and more and more realised the moral elements in his creation.

3. Naturally, the prophet, looking back over the history of Israel, now as he conceives it at an end, read it in certain lights; he interpreted it, he construed it, and it seemed to him that its meaning, now that Israel's redemption was at the door, was this: the servant of the Lord had borne the sins of Israel, *i.e.* of Israelites. Gathering up all the sorrows together, the patience, the meekness, the teaching, the sufferings unto death of godly men, the body of the servant incarnated, it was as if this person, always incarnate in Israel, had borne the sins of the individuals, and they were redeemed; and history now, as we speak of history, hastened to its close in the glory of the Lord.

4. This was now the meaning of Israel's history when standing at the end of it, its whole significance apparent, and in front of the final Restoration, which was, in truth, just the result of its real meaning, the prophet could read it as a whole. But that which he saw to be its meaning was, no doubt, a necessity of the history. That which the history, as he was enabled to read it, embodied and contained, namely, this bearing of the people's sins, was a necessity in order that the history should run its full course. The prophet read the history now as it seemed to him ended; it had this meaning to him, redemption of the people through the bearing of their sins; and it could not have reached its end in any other way.

5. The prophet conceived himself standing at the end of Israel's history, with only one momentum of it now to occur, the restoration and final felicity in God's presence, as described in chap. 60; and it was just because the history contained within it the atonement of the people's sins as

a thing completed and transacted, that the restoration was possible and assured. But the prophet's position at the end of the history was only an ideal one. Yet what is important is, that he conceives himself at the end, and that he fully recognises the moral significance of the situation. He stands amidst the profoundest moral conceptions,—the true conditions of restoration are present to his mind, and he conceives them as realised in fact.

6. Yet we know that Israel's history had not then ended. But the moral conditions of its taking end which the prophet perceived are true conditions. The real end will correspond to the ideal. We are already able to see his conceptions verified. The necessity of the redemptive history, that sins should be borne, has been satisfied. One truly corresponding to the prophet's ideal Being, the divine in Israel incarnated, sinless and suffering for the sins of the people, has taken their sins away. Nothing now stands in the way of their restoration.

7. Thus I think all that is essential is conserved. The Christian solution is already here in its conceptions. And it is here, though not absolutely in the Christian form, in a form not far from it,—in a form as near it as could be expected in this age with its necessities; for one of the necessities of this age, as of all ages of the history of the people of God, was that they should feel that they had a *present* redemption. For the ancient Scripture was written not merely for us, but for the ancient people; and the prophet throws the Christian ideas into the living history of that time, making the people see them embodied there, and enabling them to feel that salvation was a thing real to them in their own day.

Any exegesis of ours, here or elsewhere, that would be contrary to the New Testament, or not in harmony with it, would be false. But suppose this were the prophet's conception, an Israel in Israel, something made up of the

divine forces concentrated in Israel, its election, creation, endowment with God's word, therefore, because divine, indestructible, and that could not fail of realising God's purpose of salvation in Israel and thus in the world,—suppose this were the prophet's conception which he has personified, made by a remarkable mental process a Being, is not his conception singularly verified in the history of our Lord? Of course, to form his picture of this ideal Being, he has gathered together traits from the history of Israel in all times, especially the time of suffering, the trials of faithful men, the death of martyrs who died only to rise again in a spiritual seed, the unvocalised testimony of prophets amidst persecutions,—whatever was of redemptive significance in Israel he has brought together to form his ideal Israel.

And if this view be just, we should have not only the expression of profound truths of religion, the profoundest truths revealed in the Old Testament, but an intellectual creation of surprising brilliancy, a piece of literature to which there is nothing equal perhaps in any other writings that exist. The writers of Scripture certainly do not despise literary splendour, nor do they consider it superfluous, much less injurious. Their whole minds, intellect, and imagination are consecrated to God, and inspired by Him. The Scriptures, besides being the word of God, are splendid creations of mind; and perhaps in our religious compositions we might with advantage keep the example of the prophets before us, for they show us that truth may be allied with the highest literary power and brilliancy without any detriment to the truth.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Work of the Servant of the Lord.

The opinion that the 'servant of the Lord' in Isaiah was some individual of his own time or the time of the author of these chapters, supposing him not to have been Isaiah, has been dismissed as unsupported, and now, indeed, generally abandoned. Bunsen, who thought Baruch the author of these chapters, considered Jeremiah the subject of them. But such opinions are only valuable as a kind of guide to the mental character of their authors, which they do not tend to set in a very favourable light. The only view that can be held consistently with the statements in the passage is, that Israel is the servant of the Lord. But as conflicting predicates are used by the prophet of this Israel who is servant, it is evident that the prophet does not use the term Israel always in the same sense; and as things are said of the servant which were never true of the people of Israel as a people, we have concluded that the prophet speaks of Israel ideally, or at least as existing in several forms. Hence a variety of predicates can fairly be applied to it, which, though not true of Israel as it ever was, yet were more or less true of some elements in it at all times, and became fully true of Him who gathered up into Himself in perfection all its essential elements.

The only question, therefore, that requires further elucidation is in what way the prophet conceived that Israel accomplished the work of the servant of the Lord. Israel has been compared to a pyramid, of which the base was all

Israel as it was usually found, 'blind,' 'deaf,' a people robbed and spoiled, etc.; then a smaller section embracing the true Israel, who were thirsting, 'seeking water,' 'seeking righteousness,' desponding and saying, "My way is hid from Jehovah," "The Lord hath forgotten me," this true Israel being very much represented by the prophetic body; and, finally, the apex of the pyramid, one who drew into himself all the lines of Israel's development, and was the true Israel of God fully. This is the view of Delitzsch, and is one that expresses Israel both as to quality and number, which vary inversely,—the greater the number, the more deteriorated the quality,—till at last the unity embodies the perfection of the qualities. This view finds the Messiah, Israel, reduced to a unit already in the 42nd chapter. This same view has been represented in this country in a way somewhat different, and more like the representations of the New Testament as to the relations of the Messiah and His people.

The figure of the head and the body has been employed, and the diversity of predications explained by saying that some were applicable only to that part of the whole which was head, and some only to that part of the whole which was body, and some to the complex whole, comprising both head and body. I do not think that such a way of representing the relation of the Messiah to His people prevails in the Old Testament. Indeed, the way of presentation here is just the reverse. Israel, the people, is not an extension of the Messiah the head; on the contrary, the Messiah the kernel is a concentration of Israel the mass. In the Old Testament the lines are found only converging towards a point. This point reached, which is the Messiah, the contrary process begins, and the lines diverge away from it. In the Old Testament the Church brings forth the Messiah,—she has from the first conceived Him; in the New, He is the Captain of salvation, by whom God brings many sons to glory.

Another way of conceiving the servant so as that all

the predications should be applicable, is to regard Israel as a root consisting of several folds. This conception of the servant Israel does not differ from that of Delitzsch. The third way is to regard Israel as a unity with several determinations, as having certain intentions of God impressed upon it and embodied in it, and as having, corresponding to each of these intentions, some class that more or less truly realised them. Israel embodies several distinct ideas. These ideas are more or less completely exhibited in various classes in Israel,—each of which classes may be regarded as determinations of the one Israel. And the prophet, when speaking of the servant, always means Israel the servant; but means it in this or that aspect of it, and describes it in terms of this or that class in it, which realises that aspect or side of its ideal. This is certainly the true view. We shall therefore consider what classes these chapters describe as really existing in Israel. First, there were true prophets, *e.g.*: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings. Thy watchmen lift up the voice; with the voice together they sing."[1] Second, there were false prophets: "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which cannot have enough: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain."[2] Third, there were many true servants of Jehovah: "Ye that know righteousness."[3] "The poor and needy are seeking water."[4] "The righteous perishes, and no man lays it to heart."[5] "Ho, every one that thirsteth,"[6]—although, perhaps, even these true worshippers were very faint-hearted. "My way is hid from Jehovah";[7] and very unintelligent many of them, hence called blind without eyes: "Who is blind, but My servant?"[8] and blind with eyes: "Bring forth the blind people

[1] Isa. $52^{7f.}$. [2] Isa. $56^{10f.}$. [3] Isa. 51^{7}.
[4] Isa. 41^{17}. [5] Isa. 57^{1}. [6] Isa. 55^{1}.
[7] Isa. 40^{27}. [8] Isa. 42^{19}.

that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears";[1] "We grope for the wall as if blind, yea we grope as if we had no eyes."[2] Fourth, there were hypocritical worshippers, insincere servants: "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, who swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth nor in righteousness."[3] Fifth, and finally, there were open idolaters and ethnicisers, persecutors of God's servants the prophets and the pious among the people: "Draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress."[4] "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."[5] Israel contained all these classes; hence, Israel the servant may be described in terms characteristic of these classes; they may be looked at as determinations of the one Israel. But, of course, it is chiefly as realising the various sides of the idea of Israel that it is addressed and called servant. Now, the sides of this idea we found to be mainly these: election; mission—to set judgment in the earth; endowment for this mission—"I have put My spirit upon him"; and, finally, a certain strife involving suffering in fulfilling the mission—"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law."

Now, it is to the last of these that we must draw special attention; but we may briefly run over the others to see how they are realised more or less in Israel the mass. First, election. This lies at the basis of the very idea of servant. God chooses who shall serve Him. Israel was God's elect. Abraham was chosen, called from the ends of the earth. Of course, this predicate is applicable to the nation and church of Israel. It is both an ideal and an actual attribute, competently applied to Israel in its widest as well as its narrowest sense. Israel is son, and Israelites are sons. Israel is servant, and Israelites are servants. Israel is elect, and

[1] Isa. 43^8. [2] Isa. 59^{10}. [3] Isa. 48^1.
[4] Isa. 57^3. [5] Isa. 50^6.

Israelites are elect ones. And, of course, election implies help and upholding, and also divine pleasure in the elect subject, "in whom My soul delighteth." God was pleased in Israel even when Israel sinned; His mercy did not depart from her.

Second, the mission and endowment. God chose the servant to serve Him; but, of course, the chosen one must be made His servant, not being so before; must be made obedient, being disobedient. The equipment for service is, in one word, endowment with the spirit of God: "I have put My spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." Now, this can be said of Israel. It is often said in the prophets of the people in general. Joel prophesies: "I will pour out My spirit on all flesh." We should explain one side of it thus: Israel is the bearer and medium of God's revelation. This is an essential element of the idea of Israel. It is one determination, even a chief one of this people. "What advantage then hath the Jew? Much every way; chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."[1]

No doubt this side of Israel's idea was best realised in the prophetic order, or in the prophetic office; and hence some have considered the servant to be the prophetic order. But while unquestionably the prophetic office of the servant is more largely insisted on than any other, and while also his sufferings are sometimes said to be those borne by him in executing his prophetic office, as especially in chap. $50^{4ff.}$: "The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learners: He waketh mine ear to hear: and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back"; yet there are other predications of the servant which imply that he is coextensive with all Israel, which this theory would exclude, and which show that the prophetic office or function is not exhaustive of the servant, but only one determination of that subject which is servant.

[1] Rom. $3^{1f.}$.

The servant is Israel; one side, a main side, of Israel's idea is as the revealer of God's truth. Hence Israel in its prophetic character will be called Servant, and the prophetic order may fairly be considered Israel's determination on this side.

Now, it is but an extension of this when it is said to be part of the servant's mission to be the *light of the Gentiles.* The meaning of this seems to be that God's word and revelation will make Israel so luminous as to attract the Gentiles, who shall walk in this light, — Israel's light in which she walks and which she casts, shall become the light in which they shall walk: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come. . . . And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."[1] It is manifest that Israel from the first had a world-wide purpose to fulfil in its calling, as it was said to Abraham: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Now it may be quite true that this purpose has been fully realised in Christ, but it is quite possible that the prophet may have said it here of the mass Israel. Israel became the light of the Gentiles. What elements in Israel became so, or what individuals, need not be here matter of prophecy. It was Israel—some elements in Israel—Israel in that determination of it called prophetic. It may be that it was Christ. If so—it was Israel, for He was an Israelite, of the seed of David according to the flesh, the seed of Abraham. It may be that it was through the instrumentality of His missionaries the apostles. If so, it was still Israel. They were all Israelites; the greatest of them, the Apostle of the Gentiles, was an 'Hebrew of the Hebrews.' It was Israel—Israelitish elements, Israelitish truth, Israelitish men.

Indeed, this representation of the prophet has not yet been strictly fulfilled; but so far as the Gentiles walk in light, it is in Israel's light. And it is possible that his very

[1] Isa. $60^{1.\ 3}$.

way of representing it may yet be true. That way is this, that the luminous elements in Israel so increase in brilliancy as to envelop all Israel in the light; and that the Gentiles, attracted by this light of the united Israel, gather round her or towards her, as the more nebulous matter towards the nucleus and central light. It is certainly not impossible that this may yet be literally fulfilled. Seeing all the rays of light in the nation converged into a unity and point in Christ, who realised all the purposes of God with Israel in Himself; and seeing He gathered around Him as missionaries, Jews, all of whom thus became lights to the Gentiles, but yet the nation was not gathered; nor was the light then, nor is it now, national, only a thin band of light existing and running through the ages, called by the apostle the election of grace, it is certainly not impossible that this thin line of light may widen till it embrace the whole nation, which shall thus become the light of the world literally. It is not absurd to suppose that as the light gradually contracted from the prophecy of Israel to one point in Christ the Israelite, so it may gradually wax from that point so as to embrace the nation Israel again, which may thus form a luminous centre around which all the nations shall gather, according to the form in which the prophet in these chapters presents the conception. Of course, another side of endowment with the spirit was the *life*. But both knowledge and life are embraced under the one term *light*. Indeed, the word knowledge or law is exhaustive of salvation: "By his knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many"; "The law shall go out from Mount Zion."

Now comes the most difficult question, the suffering of the servant. And various questions rise before us; as for example, Is it taught in these chapters that it was part of the servant's mission to suffer? Or is the method of representation rather that he suffered in executing the other parts of his mission? Again, is his suffering represented as being

merely for the good of those whom it benefits? or is the relation represented as closer, namely, that the suffering was really an atonement for the sins of others? As to the first question, I do not think it is anywhere formally taught that the servant's mission was to suffer. Suffering was no part of his mission, yet it is considered as inevitably connected with his mission. His mission was to restore the tribes of Israel so as to be the light of the Gentiles, to plant a heaven and found an earth, and to say to Zion, "Thou art my people."[1]

But, on the other hand, while this suffering is regarded as undergone in the execution of the servant's mission and from the servant's identification with the people, it is represented as strictly vicarious and atoning, and not merely beneficial, or resulting in salvation; that is, the sufferings due to the people's sins fell on him and were exhausted. He was among them, not himself subject to suffering as they were. He was involved in the suffering due to their sins; whether it was that which they meantime were suffering or no, may be difficult to say. It seems greater; for they wondered at its extent, and were shocked at it. His suffering exhausted the penalty due to the sins, and the people were released. And a third question is, Are the sufferings endured those of an individual, or those of a class idealised and personified?—a question the answer to which may be difficult to give, considering that the difference between a person and a personification is scarcely to be detected. But, as before, we at least reach this conclusion, that on some element or other in Israel there fell sufferings which atoned for the sins of Israel,—that Israel itself wrought out its own salvation: "The seed of the woman bruised the head of the serpent, which bruised His heel";[2] "As by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead."[3]

The question, whether it was part of the servant's mission to suffer, or whether suffering was merely endured in fulfilling

[1] Isa. 51^{16}. [2] Gen. 3^{15}. [3] 1 Cor. 15^{21}.

his mission, does not seem to possess the importance which is often attached to it. For it was the servant's mission to do what he did; if he suffered, it was part of it to suffer. And if what he did was accomplished by suffering, no doubt that was the needful means to it. But on Old Testament grounds not theories but facts are to be looked for. And the passage says, "With his stripes we are healed." He was wounded, and they were healed; his wounding was for their sins, and was the way to their healing.

I do not think that in these chapters the suffering servant atones for the sins of the Gentiles. Rather the order is that he atones for the sins of Israel, who is thus restored; and Israel restored becomes the light of the Gentiles. The Gentiles see the humiliation of the servant, and they then see his exaltation, and they submit themselves to him so exalted. But their salvation is represented rather under the form of an enlightenment, Israel's under the form of an atonement.

Now, it is the practice of Scripture in general to deal with concrete cases and apply its principles to them,—principles which, though not applied by it further, are capable of further application. Thus Paul argues that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. Now, it can hardly be doubted that the *us* are Jews, and the *law* is the Mosaic law. As it is said again, God sent forth His Son, made under the law, *i.e.* a Jew, to redeem them that were under the law, *i.e.* Jews, that we, *i.e.* Jews and Gentiles, might receive the adoption of children. But it is evident enough that what is said of the law here is said of it as *law* and not as Mosaic law; and that though not here said of any other law such as the natural, and of those under it, such as the Gentile nations, yet the things here said being said of law, are true also of that natural law and of those under it. And in like manner, though the servant is said to atone for Israel only, yet it is for Israel who all, like sheep, had gone astray; and so we

may extend the principle to all who in like manner go astray.

Now, let me say a little on these three things just mentioned, namely, suffering, vicarious suffering, and the question of personal suffering, or the suffering of a class personified. As to the first, the suffering of God's servants in general, and of course of the servant, all Scripture is full of it. One of the most fruitful Messianic ideas, as it was the first, was that of enmity between the two seeds, entailing a conflict, ending in a victory. But the conflict entailed suffering—bruising, although but of the heel. Sin occasioned suffering to the servant in two ways: in the shape of opposition from sin without, and in the way of divine chastisement on sin within. Wherever there was God's servant, there the evil world joined in conflict with him. It brought him into bondage in Egypt, into frequent subjugation in Palestine, into exile and political dissolution in Assyria and Babylon. And so individuals were subject to the persecutions of the wicked about them; and though they gradually surmounted them, it was often with great loss and pain to themselves. So Joseph rose through conflict to peace. So David reached the kingdom. So Israel came into Canaan. So the Lord passed into the heavens. So the Church through much tribulation enters into glory. So the individual saint passes through a fight of afflictions to his rest. It is the law—the law of service, verified in all servants, and most of all in the Servant.

Again, suffering falls on the servant from his own imperfections. The Egyptian bondage was of the nature of a chastisement; those fiery tribes that hung on Israel and harassed his march in the wilderness, but took vengeance on his idolatries: the Philistines, the Assyrians, Nebuchadnezzar, were all instruments of chastisement in God's hand. Now, if we look at the condition of the servant in these chapters, it is one of suffering,—whether the servant be all Israel or some element in Israel. This series of prophecies begins,

"Comfort ye My people, and say that her warfare is accomplished." "But thou Israel, My servant, fear thou not, I will help thee."[1]

Moreover, when the mission of the servant to bring forth judgment to the Gentiles is first intimated, it is implied that the difficulties in the way will be severe: "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth."[2] And in chap. 49 the servant is introduced lamenting his little success, and ready to succumb to the difficulties he had to encounter: "Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought." Also in this chapter as well as in chaps. 52 and 53 the sufferings that fall upon the servant are inflicted both by his own people and by the nations,—he is despised in soul, an abhorrence of the heathen, a servant of rulers;[3] the last epithet at least indicating heathen oppression, which, of course, is commonly dwelt upon throughout the passage. In chap. $50^{4ff.}$ the suffering prophet is afflicted chiefly by his own people: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheek to them that pull out the hair." Thus in many ways the servant suffered. He suffered from the opposing world without, and from the untheocratic elements of his own people, who misunderstood him.

As yet, however, there is hardly any approach to vicarious suffering. But an approach to it began to be made in two ways. First, all this taught the close connection between sin and suffering. The whole Jewish history was an inculcation of this lesson. Their frequent humiliation under their enemies, and at last the dissolution of the State, showed that suffering was the invariable consequence of sin. For the order was invariably this: The people sinned. Then the anger of God was kindled. Then He proceeded to chastise them by defeats, exiles, and such like. This process was too often repeated to be misunderstood, and too often expounded

[1] Isa. 41^{8}. [2] Isa. 42^{4}. [3] Isa. 49^{7}.

in the prophets not to be known. The process gives us three things,—sin, anger of God, chastisement. But generally a fourth thing followed. By and by God's anger passed away, and He returned to His people. This return followed perhaps generally upon the people's repentance; but the anger of God had passed away. There was a certain exhaustion of the divine wrath. The chastisement seemed enough to the mind of God,—her iniquity is accepted נִרְצָה עֲוֹנָהּ. And restoration followed.

And in these chapters of Isaiah it is not seldom said that God of His mercy saves them: "I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions." The doctrine is by no means that repentance saves them in the Old Testament any more than in the evangelical doctrine. The one may be a condition of the other, though not its cause. God is satisfied with the chastisement; it is in His estimation enough. His anger goes away, His pity returns, and He redeems the people out of their misery.

Even here we have not yet vicariousness, but we have the idea not only of suffering being a consequence of sin, but of an atonement for sin by suffering, of an exhaustion of wrath by chastisement. Indeed, the idea of chastising sins by sufferings seems to imply the idea of atoning for them by sufferings, unless the connection of sin and suffering be considered a mere natural law, as burning follows too close an approach to the fire. There is no probability that any moral law is so, the administration of them being retained, so to speak, freely in God's hand. Here then we have an important step in the direction of vicarious atonement, namely, the idea of the possibility of exhausting the effects of sin through suffering. This is one side of it. Both these things—namely, that God is angry with sin, and, being angry, proceeds to inflict punishment for it on the sinner; and, second, that the anger of God becomes exhausted after a certain infliction of punishment—were taught as facts in the Old Testament.

They were manifested many times in the history. It was taught that God must be angry with sin, but perhaps not that He must punish it. But the regularity with which He did so must have suggested the question whether there be not a principle in the nature of God constraining Him to punish sin.

I do not know that we can go further than raise the same question still, even after all that has occurred in the history of redemption. There is a principle in His nature by which God must hate and be angry with sin, as He must love and be pleased with holiness. But as it is denied that He is under any obligation, unless He promises, to reward virtue, ought it not to be in like manner denied that He is under any obligation, unless He threatens, to punish sin, if punishment be aught else but anger and denial of fellowship? I do not know that the things are on the same footing. I suggest the question whether they are not? If they are, then we cannot pretend to go further in theologising than merely to appeal to facts, saying, Such is the constitution of things. Of course, the question is also raised, Is all God's punishment of sin in the Old Testament not mere correction? Is it at all *penal?*

An approach to the other side of the question, namely, the suffering by one not the sinner, of the chastisement due to the sin, must have been made in many ways, although real vicarious suffering is perhaps not taught anywhere so explicitly as in Isa. 53. But when it is taught that the prophets in their mission endured persecution from the wickedness of those whom they sought to enlighten, and whose salvation they ultimately secured, in a sort of way the sins of those about them fell on them, and through their suffering actively these sins were removed. In like manner, when the prophets and other just men, who were unable to stem the tide of decay and uphold the State in its later years, were carried away into captivity, and suffered the troubles of exile in common with

the sinful people,—trouble more keenly felt by them than by untheocratic men,—they were bearing not their own sins, but the sins of others. They were numbered with the transgressors. And when, by their efforts, they drew down additional oppression on themselves from the sinners about them, but yet succeeded in bringing about a restoration, here again they bore sins not their own, and here again by their sufferings others were healed.[1]

Still this is not strictly vicarious suffering, but it is an approach to it, a nearer approach than perhaps can be seen elsewhere. One does see the same even in ordinary life. For no good is gained without labour and pain. The discoveries that benefit the race, the inventions that advance civilisation and lighten labour, the explorations that open up unknown continents and pave pathways for commerce, are all effected at much cost, oftentimes at the forfeiture of life, to those who accomplish them,—who thus suffer in behalf of mankind.

Again, there is a nearer approach. The sufferings alluded to are scarcely connected with sin, except, at any rate, in a very general way. But there are many who enter directly into sufferings that come of evil and share them, and by taking them on themselves remove them. The parental instinct leads to unspeakable sacrifices; love of country makes men lay down their lives in the nation's quarrel, or give themselves by vow for the people; in a thousand ways suffering that comes from evil is entered upon by those who were free from it, and being borne by them is lifted off those on whom it would naturally have fallen. This is something like vicarious

[1] One side of this process was very familiar to Israelitish thinkers, namely, one generation bearing the punishment of the sins of their progenitors: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." God describes Himself as visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children. And the prophet says, "Our fathers sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities."

But the other side, a succeeding generation saved or blessed by the sufferings of one prior to them, is perhaps not to be found in Scripture if not in Isa. 53.

suffering. And we can easily conceive the same thing suggested in Israel's history. There is a unity in a nation whereby the sins committed by any part of it falls upon the whole, and the righteousness of one part extends over all. The sins of the mass involved even the theocratic prophets in exile and suffering. And the generation that arose in exile suffered, though not for the sins it had committed, but as being involved in the consequences of the sins committed by its ancestors. But the time of release came. And the new returning generation might look back to the preceding sufferers, and feel that it was at the cost of their sufferings that it was restored, and that God's anger had been exhausted by the sufferings in exile of a generation more or less innocent. National unity involves the innocent in the ruin of the guilty, but it also brings about the redemption of the guilty through the sufferings of the innocent.

Still all this hardly comes up to strict vicariousness. There were things in Israel's history which taught this idea more perfectly; for example, in the history of Abraham's sacrificing his son,[1] he was commanded by God to offer a ram תַּחַת בְּנוֹ *instead of his son.* Here, at least, one victim was accepted instead of another, the death of one creature instead of the death of another; though we may have no warrant for saying that Isaac's sacrifice was of the nature of a sin-offering. Again, the whole sacrificial system taught the same truth of vicarious death and suffering on the one hand, and the connection of this suffering with sin on the other. And on more than one occasion in the history of Israel, as for example in Ex. 32, when the people worshipped the golden calf, God's vengeance fell on the people and decimated them; and Moses prayed: "Now forgive them their sin, or else blot me out of Thy book," the meaning of which prayer is, as Kurtz says, "that God might accept the punishment inflicted upon those who had been executed

[1] Gen. 22^{13}.

already, as an expiation or covering for the same sin on the part of those who were still living; and that, if this did not suffice, that He would take Moses' own life, the life of the innocent one, as a covering or expiation." And there can be no doubt that the idea of substitution and vicarious atonement was a prevalent one among the Jews in the time of Christ, since it comes out unmistakably in the declaration of Caiaphas "that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." [1]

How, then, did the prophet represent the work of the servant? In the 42nd chapter, as we have shown, the servant is not an individual, even though the evangelist [2] rightly sees a reflection of the servant's character and motive in those of our Lord, when, fearing a collision with the authorities, and dissatisfied with the mistaken enthusiasm of His followers, He withdrew Himself. He shunned violent encounters with His enemies, and He disliked the loud applause of His friends. The whole prophecy of the servant is fulfilled in Christ, not in the superficial sense that certain phrases may be applied to Him, but in the far deeper sense, that the whole spirit and scope of the prophet's conceptions are verified in Him. "The flickering flame He shall not quench," might serve as the motto of the life and work of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost. It was not a dead, but a dying, world into which He flung Himself. A dead world would have had no attractions for Him; it was the struggling life among men that drew Him, for virtue and goodness is the love of life.

But though the servant be here represented as a person in his intercourse with other persons among the heathen, it can hardly be doubted that the prophet's thought is national. It is the future relation of 'the people' Israel to other peoples that he describes. The grand thought has now taken possession of statesmen of the higher class, that the

[1] John 18^{14}. [2] Matt. 12^{17-21}.

point of contact between nation and nation need not be the sword; that the advantage of one people is not the loss of another, but the gain of mankind; that the land where Freedom has grown to maturity, and is worshipped in her virgin serenity and loveliness, should nurse the newborn babe in other homes; and that the strange powers of the mind of man and the subtle activities of his hand should not be repressed, but fostered in every people, in order that the product may be poured into the general lap of the race. This idea is supposed to be due to Christianity. And, immediately, it is; but it is older than Christianity. It is found in this prophet. And it is not new even in him, for a prophet presumably a century and a half his senior had said: "The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples as a dew from Jehovah, as showers upon the grass."[1]

Similar teaching as to the work which the servant of Jehovah is destined to accomplish is given in chap. 49; but the climax is reached, as already indicated, in the most important passage of all, chap. 52^{13}–53; regarding which, the question was put long, long ago: "Of whom speaketh the prophet thus? Of himself, or of some other man?" Certainly not of himself; and as certainly, therefore, of some other man. Behind this answer, however, the further question still remains, whether was it of a real or of an ideal man? Of a man of flesh and blood, who, as the prophet foresaw, would appear in the world? or of an ideal man, in one sense the creation of the prophet's own mind, though in another sense existing from the moment of Israel's call and creation down all its history, and to exist for ever? The question, therefore, is not whether the prophet's great figure of the servant has been verified in Christ. On that, all except Jews are agreed. It is the traditional interpretation of the Jewish Church that the Messiah is here predicted,

[1] Mic. 5^{7}.

and of the Christian Church that in Christ the words have been fulfilled. Nor is the question whether the spirit of Christ, which was in the prophet, led his mind to the great thoughts which he expresses with a view to Christ and in preparation for Him. Over this also there need be no dispute. The ideas regarding the suffering of one who was the servant of the Lord,—of its being because of the sins of the people, and of its effect in taking away the people's sins and mediating their redemption,—all these ideas were assuredly given out here with a view to Christ, and in preparation for Him in whom they have been verified.

On the other hand, it cannot be even doubted that, in many parts of his prophecy, the writer calls Israel the servant of the Lord, and that this nomenclature of the prophet himself must be our starting-point, and regulate in some degree our conclusions; for it is inconceivable that the author should express different ideas by the same term, servant, or that he should apply the same epithet to wholly different subjects. Undoubtedly, however, there is a certain double use of the term. The people Israel, as a people under certain conceptions, is the servant of the Lord. But it is never Israel, as a people like other peoples, that is servant, but as the people chosen of the Lord and endowed by Him with true knowledge of Himself, and as having His word incarnated in it in order to be a light to the nations of the earth. Israel, the servant, is not all Israel, that is, not Israel as embracing all Israelites, but that in Israel which realises the ideal in Israel, which may and must be called Israel. It is this element in Israel which is servant. Whatever its number be, be it many or few, it realises the conception of Israel; and this name, therefore, belongs to it.

Israel, the servant, is frequently in these chapters contrasted, not with another who is servant,—for there are not two servants of the Lord,—but with Israelites, with the tribes of Jacob and the 'preserved' of Israel. And when

the servant's work results in the opening of blind eyes in order to the restoration of the land, and in the bringing back of the tribes scattered in all lands,[1] then the individuals are represented in chap. 53 as looking back from their position of restoration and redemption, and confessing their former want of faith and little estimation of the servant of the Lord, who, they now see, suffered for their offences, and bore the chastisement of their peace—the chastisement that secured their peace, *i.e.* the salvation which they now enjoy.

In a word, the prophet, looking back upon the history of Israel with its continuous record of suffering, has made these profound moral generalisations regarding it. In order to the redemption and restoration of the whole mass of the nation, its sins must be borne; and this has been done through the suffering of the servant. An Israel within Israel, a divine element which the genius of the prophet idealises into a Being,—a true Israel,—has borne, in suffering and sorrow, the sins of the mass. This is to him the meaning of Israel's sad history. Nay, such a history was necessary to the restoration of the whole people and of the race. Hence it is not any particular element in Israel that bears the sins of the others; it is the ideal Israel that bears the sins of the actual.

It is to be noted that when the people Israel is called servant, it is always conceived as a unity, never as made up of individuals. It is not the individuals even together that are the servant; it is the people, conceived not merely as a unity, but almost as a person. Hence it is always addressed in the 2nd sing. masc., '*Thou* Israel, My servant.' When the prophet addresses the people Israel, considered as a nation made up of individuals, he uses the 2nd pers. plur.

From the preceding remarks it becomes evident that what gives rise to the twofold use of the term 'servant,

[1] Isa. 49[8ff.]

or rather to its use in a wider as well as a narrower application, while the conception itself remains the same, is just the antithesis that always exists between the idea and the reality, between the conception of the ideal servant and the condition of the individuals or masses of the people. Nevertheless, I do not consider that the servant is a collective, personified and idealised, that is, the pious Israel of the nation in Babylon. This way of stating the point seems to me to begin at the wrong end, to put that first which should be second. To the prophet the conception or idea of 'servant' is always first; those in whom the idea is incarnated are second. The prophet does not first look at those who might be called the spiritual Israel, and then idealise them, and call them the servant of Jehovah. On the contrary, the idea is always first. In other words, the prophet does not idealise the actual; he actualises an ideal. He does not rise up from a spiritual Israel to the idea of the servant of Jehovah; he comes down from his idea to an actual, which more or less corresponds to it.

The servant is not a collective personified, though he may be a *conception incarnated;* and this incarnation of the conception may have been seen in the Exile, especially on one side of it, that of suffering and humiliation, but not in the Exile only. There was an Israel within Israel, all through its history. This is rather the personification of the conceptions which go to form the servant. Still this personification, made up out of the divine forces within Israel, is treated by the prophet as a real Being, a Being existing throughout the whole history of Israel with a moral self-identity. This Israel was, no doubt, at all times represented by Israelites. It was not a mere conception. There were always individuals nearly true to it. The abstraction had embodiment in saints and prophets, in confessors and martyrs for the truth. To the prophet, therefore, the meaning of the history was the redemption of the people through the bearing of their sins by

the servant, and in no other way could the history have reached its predetermined end. Thus the prophet mused, as he conceived himself standing at the end of Israel's history before the last momentum of it, the restoration and the glory. But Israel's history had not reached its end in his day. It was an ideal end that he saw. Yet if we put ourselves at the real end, the real will correspond with the ideal. We are already able to see his conceptions verified. The necessity of the redemptive history, that sins should be borne, has been satisfied. One truly corresponding to the prophet's ideal Being,—the divine in Israel incarnated,—sinless, and suffering for the people, has taken their sins away, and brought about a full redemption.

Perhaps I may be excused if I make one practical remark. The question who the servant is, is one that greatly divides scholars. But suppose we conclude, as we have just done, that in the mind of the prophet the servant was not a future person, but an idealising and personification of the conception of the people Israel, though with the accessory notion that this conception was already realised in fact, and incarnated in saints and prophets and martyrs, how should we deal with the passage in our practical and public exposition of it? Now, it would certainly be very misleading to ordinary minds, if we said that the servant of the Lord is the people of Israel. It would not only be misleading, but really untrue. Because, in the first place, the servant is not the people Israel as a people, but as a divine creation for a great object, namely, to be His servant. This holds even when the servant is spoken of in the mildest and most general way. And, secondly, even this is not all, because the conception is sometimes narrowed, as we have shown, so as to make the servant the true representation or incarnation of this conception, put in opposition to the mass of Israel as individuals. Thus not without many limitations could it be said that the servant is Israel. And, finally, the prophet's conception has now received fulfilment in one in

whom his idea has been fully, or more than fully, realised. And this, undoubtedly, is the practical truth most appropriate to hearers of the word of God.

At the same time, we ought to feel under obligation, as interpreters of Scripture to others, to make some effort to explain what seems to us the prophet's own thought, and therefore the amount of truth he was commissioned to teach the people of God in his own age. His thought actually embraces, as we have seen, all the main Christian ideas of atonement and bearing of sins, through that sinless element in Israel which was a divine creation in Israel. Hence the prophet was able so to present his thought as to make the people of God of that age feel that they themselves had a present salvation through the Lord, their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Restoration of the Jews.

There are several events in the development of the Christian Church which are often alluded to in Scripture, and which cannot be passed over in silence by any one who undertakes to give an account of Old Testament prophecy. There is, first of all, the coming again of the Lord, an event which certainly bulked much more largely in the imagination and faith of the early Church than it does in ours. Again, allusion is often made to the Church attaining to a state of great prosperity and influence. This state of prosperity is sometimes described with reference to the internal condition of the Church: "My people shall be all righteous"; "Arise, shine, for thy light is come; and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.' Sometimes it is with reference to its influence on the world: "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising"; and sometimes with reference to the powers of evil which seduce the Church and mankind, and whose activity shall then be greatly curbed. Satan is represented as bound with a great chain. With regard to the time during which this blessed state shall endure, in one passage[1]—the only very specific one—it is said to be a thousand years. "He laid hold on the Dragon, that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. . . . And they (the saints) lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Hence the name popularly given to this period, the millennium.

[1] Rev. 20^{1-7}.

Further, there is no doubt that in the Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and the New, the highest condition of the Church's prosperity is connected with the coming of Christ. So far as the Old Testament is concerned, the one coming predicted there has now parted asunder into two, historically the first and the second coming. Then, so far as the New is concerned, it is disputed whether the highest descriptions of the prosperity of the Church refer to its final or to its millennial condition. Or, again, whether the coming of Christ, which in Revelation precedes the millennium, be real or figurative. In other words, the point in dispute is whether the real second coming of the Lord precedes the millennium or follows it. Those who hold the former are called premillenarians, or, more shortly, millenarians. Put alternatively, the point in dispute is this: whether, when you are sure that it is the real unfigurative second coming that is spoken of, the descriptions of felicity that follow belong to the final perfect state of the Church, and not to the millennial comparative perfection; or whether, when you are sure that the comparative millennial perfection is spoken of, the coming of Christ, that is said to precede it, be figurative and not literal.

In our day millenarian views usually accompany belief in the restoration of the Jews to Canaan; but in the early Church, which was, in general, millenarian, belief in the restoration of the Jews to their own land does not seem to have been at all prevalent. Indeed, it seems hardly to have been known. The early Church believed—at least most of her distinguished teachers believed, though Justin Martyr informs us that many did not share the belief—that Jerusalem should be rebuilt, and that Christ should return to reign there personally a thousand years in the midst of the Church. But the inhabitants of this restored Jerusalem were not thought to be Jews, but Christians, along with the saints of the first resurrection. The Jews had no high position in the opinion of the early Church. Indeed, the

11th chapter of Romans seems expressly written to guard against the error that had arisen, it would appear, even thus early, among the Gentile converts, that the Jews had, by their unbelief, for ever forfeited the chance of salvation. In those early times what was most prominent was the unbelief and intractableness of the Jews; the Church had not before it what is now to us so imposing and wonderful, and suggestive of a deep providential design with them, their continued severance from, and refusal to amalgamate with, other nations of the earth, as Balaam foretold:

> "Lo, it is a people that dwells alone,
> And it shall not be reckoned among the nations."[1]

Such a history could not yet present itself to their minds. And, without doubt, this singular fact has greatly influenced modern speculations regarding the Jews, and helped interpreters in many cases to meanings they might not otherwise have reached.

At all events, the attitude of the Church, both towards the pre-millennial personal advent of the Saviour and this restoration of the Jews, has altered. Now, the Church does not as a body believe in the pre-millennial advent, nor does it as a body believe in the restoration; but while in the ancient Church most believed in the pre-millennial advent who did not believe nor dream of the territorial restoration, many now hold the restoration who deny the pre-millennial coming; while, of course, the majority, or perhaps all, of those who are millenarians are also restorationists.

The state of opinion on the question is something like this:

1. Some hold that there will not be even any national conversion of Israel as such. The world, indeed, shall yet be converted; that is, all the world extensively, though not pervasively, and, of course, the Jews like other people, or,

[1] Num. 23^9.

if the nationality should still exist, like other peoples; but it will be a conversion merely of individuals, though the individuals converted may amount to nearly the whole nation. In other words, *nationality*, whether of Jew or Gentile, is no more an element in God's dealing with men; in Christianity, conversion is of individuals, and apart from nationality.

2. Others go a step further, and maintain that there will be a national conversion of the Jews at some future time, when in a body, or with a unanimity fairly to be characterised as national, one element of the dispersion being in communication with another, they shall accept Christianity, and publicly and in common renounce Judaism. But while this shall surely be, there will not be, or at least there need not be, and will not be as an essential part of this movement, any return to the land of Canaan. Scripture predicts the conversion, but is silent on the restoration. What movements and migrations there may be among the nations,—what favourable opportunities for again occupying Canaan may arise through complications of the East and West, and the inevitable dissolution of the Turkish empire and its conversion to the faith of Christ,—cannot with any certainty be predicted or denied. These events, however, are part of the providence of God like other national movements, and are no essential elements in the development of Christianity, and therefore find no place in prophecy. It may be that the Jews will occupy Canaan before conversion, or it may be they will occupy it when converted; but their occupation of it has no meaning as an act in the great drama of salvation. The difference between this view and the last is that this considers God's dealings with the people still to be national, —there is a national rejection, and there will be a national receiving again. And this view is thought both to be necessary in order to a fair interpretation of such Scripture language as that in the 11th of Romans, and to afford larger scope for the exhibition of the goodness and severity of

God, and the depth of the riches both of His wisdom and knowledge.

3. A third opinion takes a step still further in advance. According to this view, there will be at some period in the Church's history yet future, both a conversion of the Jews and a restoration of them to their own land. This is predicted in Scripture, and will therefore surely come to pass. This prediction is one prediction, and not two. Scripture does not predict that the Jews shall be converted and also that they shall be restored, as if the two things were independent: it predicts conversion and restoration as one complex event, because the one is the inevitable consequence of the other, the two having been inseparably connected in God's covenant with Abraham. Possession of Canaan is an essential element of that covenant; and when, on the side of the people, its conditions are observed, then on the side of God, all its provisions shall be fulfilled. For the covenant runs: "I will establish My covenant with thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Cannan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."[1] Of course, besides this great fundamental principle, there are many express predictions in the Old Testament, and some in the New, that the Jews as a nation shall occupy their ancient land. But while this must be held, nothing more is held. No fragment of Judaism shall be restored, no rite, no sacrifice, no symbol, no feast, no pilgrimage. They that worship in this Jerusalem and in this Canaan will worship in spirit and in truth. This view adds one element to the former, which admitted permanence of nationality; this throws in the addition of the permanent heritage. And it can be easily seen that it will not be easy to maintain the halfway position of

[1] Gen. $17^{7,8}$.

admitting the nationality only. Because, on the one hand, the distinction of the nationality implies a distinct place of abode, and the preservation of the nationality, as an element of the redemptive treatment of Israel, makes probable the preservation of the former heritage, because Christianity deals no longer with nations, but with individuals.

4. Finally, some hold that there will not merely be a national conversion of the Jews and a national restoration of them to Canaan, but that the restored nation will occupy a place of greater glory in the kingdom of Christ than other peoples. They will exercise a kind of hegemony over the nations, and be the mediators between the Lord and His other people, as it is said: "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and vinedressers. But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God."[1] And some think that the city and temple shall be rebuilt, and all the glories of the ancient ceremonial re-established.

Now, this may seem an extravagant position to take up, but those who go so far as to advocate restoration to Canaan are not unnaturally driven into it by two roads. First, there are prophecies in the Old Testament that predict a restitution of the temple ceremonial with as much explicitness as the restoration to Canaan is predicted in others. Not to mention the extended prophecy regarding the restored temple in the end of Ezekiel, Zechariah predicts that "the nations shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."[2] Those, therefore, who advocate return to Canaan on the ground of the literalness of prophecy, will find their principles carrying them to this extreme. And, secondly, if the Jewish nationality be still conserved and a place appointed them in Canaan, all as parts of God's great redemptive work and not as parts of His providential government of the nations, some redemptive

[1] Isa. 61^5. [2] Zech. 14^{16}.

meaning must be found for this restored Israel. What function do they now, in their visible compact position, exercise in the Church, when the kingdoms of the nations have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ? Their distinctive redemptive position naturally suggests some redemptive sphere of influence. And thus the supremacy which many advocate over the other peoples is naturally arrived at. Hence it appears that the question is encompassed with difficulty. If you occupy the first position, you feel you are hardly doing justice to the representations of Scripture; and if you abandon it, you may find yourself driven from one position to another, till you find rest only in the last.

Perhaps the question, whether the Jews shall be restored to their own land, is of much more importance than the answer to it. No doubt, if we were able certainly to answer in the affirmative that they shall, that answer would open up to us very wonderful views of God's redemptive providence and His manner of dealing with men, and with this people in particular; and it would also lead to very attractive speculations as to the part this restored people might play in a regenerated world, and amidst a Christianity of mankind almost universal. But to us the question of the restoration becomes of importance, because it requires us to consider the principles on which an answer, if returned at all, can be justly returned; for it is certain that such diverse answers as have just been given cannot have arisen from identical principles of interpretation. Hence we must, first of all, endeavour to secure a firm footing somewhere.

Now, if we open the Old Testament anywhere, particularly in the prophetical books, there is hardly a passage which speaks of Israel, and promises redemption or any future blessing, which does not predict for them restoration to their own land. Even in the Pentateuch we read: "If then their uncircumcised heart be humbled (when I have brought them into the land of their enemies), and they then accept of the

punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember My covenant with Jacob; and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land." [1] And in Jeremiah: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper . . . and the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." [2] Such passages are both numerous and distinct. They predict in the most unmistakable manner the restoration of Israel to Canaan at some time in the Messianic age.

This age is not often, if ever, considered an extended period, but a point at which the king who reigns in righteousness appears. Of course, as this king has appeared without bringing in this happy result, it is now connected literally by many with his second appearing, while others still connect it with the appearance that has taken place, of which it shall yet be the consequence. But this question of the time, in the Messianic age, of Israel's restoration is not, at present, of importance; it is the fact of it.

Now Isaiah predicts as follows: "As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord." [3] But surely it is enough, in answer to this, to refer to the principles enunciated in such Epistles as those to the Galatians and the Hebrews. The latter intimates that these things were a figure for the time then present,—but Christ being come, an High

[1] Lev. $26^{41ff.}$. [2] Jer. 23^{5-8}. [3] Isa. 66^{22}.

Priest of good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.[1] And the former teaches that Christ, who was formerly foreshadowed in the ceremonies, having now come in person, these ceremonies are now not merely empty husks, but even the practice of them is positively evil. Thus, one large deduction has to be made from the literality of such prophecies. They predict the glories of the future worship in the form of the glorious worship of the past.

This stripping away of the ceremonial will be allowed by most. But it is evident that the events of history show that another large deduction from the literality of such predictions of Israel's return must be made. Isaiah, in his 11th chapter, predicts that God shall gather together the dispersed of Judah, and they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines; they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them. Isaiah predicts the return of Israel as taking place in the relations of the world and the nations then existing. These relations have long ago altered, and the return has not taken place. Shall these relations be restored again ere their return? Shall the Philistines dwell again on the west, and Moab and Edom on the south, and the empire of Assyria rise again into splendour on the east? Some say this shall be; and some refuse to go so far, contenting themselves with the statement that the day will declare.

Such reasoning may, not unjustly, be called the insanity of literalism. It may, however, be said the names are good for the lands. But what have mere lands to do with such things? It is always of men that Scripture speaks, of peoples, of nationalities of a certain spirit and type. It may then be said that the Moabs and Edoms of the future will

[1] Heb. 9[11f.].

bring back the restored Israel, or be their subjects. But such a principle, according to which Edom becomes the mere wicked foe of Israel, seems to turn Israel also into the mere Church, and her restoration to Canaan into mere restitution of, and investiture into, the privileges of God's people. And, consequently, by thus surrendering Moab and Edom, we lose possession not only of the restoration of Israel to Canaan, but of Israel itself. The prophecies in the Old Testament that speak of Israel evaporate in our hands, all that remains being some promises regarding the Church in the ages to come. But this is felt to be extravagant. And the result seems to come into conflict with the reasoning of St. Paul in Rom. 11^{26}. Great obscurity, it is true, hangs over the apostle's method of quoting this passage, and the way he reads it. In the original it is: "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." [1] The only words the same in both are *Zion* and *Jacob;* but that is enough for our argument.

Here, therefore, we seem at last to get some sure footing. Any hermeneutic which goes so far as to eliminate from the prophecies of the Old Testament which refer to New Testament times, the natural race of Abraham, seems to go against the methods of interpretation applied by the apostles. It may be contrary to New Testament principles to make these prophecies refer to that race alone; but what seems needful to a fair acceptance of the statements, both of the Old and the New Testaments, is the theory that the Israel spoken of in the Old is the Church begun and permanently established in that race. The name 'Israel' cannot be idealised into the abstraction 'Church'; it is the historic, real, material body, whose identity is continuous, and which, being founded in this race, is always regarded as including the Israelites. They are the root, not merely as human beings, and because some men must be the beginning of a Church,—that is a

[1] Isa. 59^{20}.

modern way of thinking unfamiliar to Scripture,—but as that race; their history is a series of facts of eternal worth and continuance.

God founded a Church in Abraham. He made him the father of the faithful; and not as one man from among men, but as what he was, distinctively from other men. These redemptive acts, done in connection with this race, were done once for all. God did not do the same acts over again with any other race,—for example, at the founding of the New Testament Church; nor did He do these acts for the seed of Abraham with the design of their influence being of limited duration; nor did He ever undo the acts. These redemptive acts laid hold of this race, never to let them go. Certainly, there are passages in Scripture that seem to contradict such a view as this, and to imply that in Christ there is no such distinction as Jew and Greek. But, before considering these statements, I must draw attention to that passage where the Apostle Paul is formally discussing the question of Israel's rejection. In Rom. $11^{1\text{-}10}$ the apostle repudiates the idea that God has cast off the Jews from all share in the Messianic salvation, supporting his *a priori* repugnance to such a thought by adducing plain facts showing that it was not so, and that, concealed under the general strong tide of national unbelief, there ran a stream of individual faith, keeping up, as in the time of Elijah, the continuity and place of the nation in the covenant, and that thus there was no casting away of the Jew, as Gentile Christians were supposing.

Then, in vv.$^{11\text{-}16}$, Paul proceeds to make some profound statements as to what is actually meant by the stumbling of the Jew. The disbelief of the Jew was to be but temporary in comparison with other things in his history, just like the stumbling over some obstacle of a man who yet does not actually fall. And the purpose of it was the in-bringing of the Gentiles, and its temporal limit the accomplishment of this. Thus the order of events should be:

rejection of the Jew in order to the fulness of the Gentiles; fulness of the Gentiles in order to the receiving again of the Jew; and, finally, the receiving of the Jew, and then life from the dead. But the passage does not deal much with the means or agencies employed by God for bringing these great results about. The chain of evolution is regarded by the apostle more as that of God's own activity for the display of His mercy and wisdom, than with respect to the means He employs on earth to fulfil His high purposes. The rejection of the Jew, or the rejected Jew, does not become the *means* of enriching the Gentiles. That may have been, but is not alluded to here. The Gentiles brought in do not become the means or the instruments of bringing back the Jew. The operations are lifted up into the sphere of God's pure personal operation. God rejects the Jew and enriches the Gentiles; yet such is the wonderfulness of God's relation to the Jews, that rejection of them becomes the riches of the world. The events are connected according to the principles of grace. When the world is reconciled, then the Jews are brought back; but the reconciled world is not the means of bringing back the Jew, except in this way, that the Jews, God's people, are thereby provoked to jealousy by those who were not a people, but now also are. The Jew is brought back, and then is life from the dead. But the Jew brought back is not the cause or the means of life from the dead, except in this way, that when God is doing an act of mercy to His people, some inconceivable blessing must be connected with it to the world in general. The judgment of the Jew was the mercy of the Gentile; the casting away of them was the reconciling of the world. What can their mercy be, and their receiving again, but life from the dead? What is there, then, to be but the blessed resurrection life?

Finally, the apostle having already, by anticipation, affirmed the receiving again of the Jew, returns to it, and from v.[25] onward directly maintains it. "I would not,

brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written,

> There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer;
> He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' [1]

This purpose bears upon the way of God in salvation, and illustrates it, making it very glorious. He makes the Gentile owe his salvation to the Jew, and again He makes the Jew owe his salvation to the Gentile; and, above all, He shows the salvation of both to be of grace; v. [30]: "For as ye (the Gentiles) in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through the unbelief of these: even so have these also now not believed, that through the mercy shown to you they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

We must now, however, consider a little more closely vv.[11–15] and v.[26]. What these verses say about the Jews is this: first, their rejection is but partial—"Blindness is happened to Israel in part"; second, it is but temporary—it is until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved; third, their temporary rejection is but a roundabout way — illustrative of the grace of God—to their final salvation. For their rejection becomes the salvation of the Gentiles. This salvation provokes them to jealousy by them that were not a people, but are now the people of God; and they return, and are saved. But of particular interest is what these verses say of the Gentiles, and the bearing on them of Israel's rejection and receiving again.

[1] Rom. 11[26].

First, by Israel's trespass salvation is come unto the Gentiles. We know how that occurred. Israel refused to hear. The early preachers everywhere turned to the Jew first. They began at Jerusalem. But they were everywhere met with hatred and persecution. And because Israel put away the gospel of God's grace from them, the missionaries of the cross turned to the Gentiles. Their diminishing was the riches of the Gentiles. But what the apostle is preaching throughout these chapters is not the rejection of the Jews, but their receiving again; not their diminishing, but their fulness. The scope of his argument is that their rejection is partial, temporary, and, rightly considered, only the means to their receiving again. And he who preaches thus is the apostle of the Gentiles. And it might seem an anomaly that the apostle of the Gentiles should preach the conversion of the Jews; for it was the rejection of the Jew that was the riches of the Gentiles.

But, so far from its being an anomaly in an apostle of the Gentiles to preach the receiving again of the Jew, he is, by that very preaching, most of all showing himself to be the true Apostle of the Gentiles: "I am speaking to you Gentiles; and inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." The doctrine of the receiving again of the Jews and their fulness is, most of all, the gospel to the Gentile. Nowhere does Paul feel himself so profoundly speaking good news to the Gentiles as when proclaiming to them the fulness of the Jews. For if, by their trespass, salvation came to the Gentiles, if the diminishing of them be the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? If the rejection of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? What is the force of this reasoning? The reasoning is: If the sin of the Jew is the salvation of the Gentile, what shall the faith of the Jew be? The rejection by God of the Jew was the reconciling of the world, what shall the

receiving of him again by God be? Wherein lies the force of this? The argument is usually held to be this, or something to this effect: If, when the Jews disbelieved, the Jewish apostles and evangelists turned to the Gentiles, and with such blessed effects as we know ensued, what effects may we suppose shall ensue, when this people becomes a nation of missionaries to the world? or what wonderful effects on the Gentile world shall the spectacle of their conversion produce? Shall there not be a universal quickening, a simultaneous rising up of the Gentile world in spiritual power and strength, —a thing like life from the dead?

Now, this does not seem to me to be precisely what the passage means. For such a meaning seems scarcely consistent either with the apostle's statement of the time that the blindness of Israel is to endure, or with the magnitude of the terms in which he describes the effects which this temporary blindness exerted upon the Gentile world. For he expressly affirms that the blindness which has happened to Israel in part shall continue until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in (v.[25]); and this expression 'fulness' of the Gentiles cannot have a different sense from the expression 'fulness' of the Jews (v.[12]). There the expression denotes the mass of the Jewish nation, as distinguished from that small remnant now believing. And 'fulness' of the Gentiles must mean the 'mass' of the Gentiles, the plenitude of Gentile believers, all the faithful that shall be from the Gentile world. And the terms in which the effect of the rejection of Israel upon the Gentile world is described lead to the same conclusion. Their trespass is the 'salvation' of the Gentiles. Their diminishing is the 'riches' of the Gentiles. Their rejection is the 'reconciling' of the world. These terms are too large to be used of a mere offering of the gospel to the Gentile world; they describe the universal acceptance of it.

It seems certain, therefore, that the apostle teaches that the unbelief of the Jews shall endure until the whole

heathen world be evangelised, and be truly obedient to the faith; that it is this imposing sight of a believing Gentile world that shall convert them, and that their conversion shall be life from the dead. This last expression, therefore, 'life from the dead,' cannot mean spiritual quickening except in a very particular sense; it cannot describe any converting effect or result produced among the Gentiles, for their fulness is already ere now come in. The expression must be taken literally, life from the dead, the resurrection life. That life will, no doubt, be a spiritual quickening; the resurrection itself will perhaps be due to the gradual rising in power of the spiritual life in each soul; and one can hardly imagine to what extent the receiving again of the Jews, both as a public spectacle, and as a spiritual force, may influence the world, and quicken and make strong the pulse of its spiritual life, and thus form a preparation and passage to the final state of the Church. But it is not this preliminary quickening, which may be upon the earth the prelude to the resurrection of the dead, and the final realising of all the powers of the kingdom of God, that is described by the expression 'life from the dead'; it is this resurrection and final life itself—this which the whole creation groaneth and waiteth for, which they who have received the first-fruits of the spirit groan for within themselves—it is this which the conversion of the Jew shall be the prelude to; and therefore to preach this conversion is most of all to preach the gospel to the weary Gentile world.

Now, if I may be permitted to intercalate a practical remark, I should like to draw attention to the peculiarity of the apostle's reasoning in its bearing on missionary enterprise. As he argues, it seems really of little consequence whether the Church prosecute with success missions among the Jews or among the Gentiles. The two react upon one another. The apostle declares himself to be, most of all, the apostle of the Gentiles, when preaching to them the inbringing of the Jews.

For the receiving again of the Jews is life from the dead; and he who preaches it, and much more he who helps towards it, forwards in the highest way the blessedness and the final life of the Gentile world. At the same time, he who turns the Gentiles to God most profoundly affects the Jew, provoking him to 'jealousy,' and favouring his own turning to the faith.

Nevertheless, it may be that the Jews shall not, as a whole, be received till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. What then? There is the remnant according to the gracious election. And who can say how great this may be? In Elijah's days it was thought to have been reduced to one; yet it was not one, but a great multitude, represented by the symbolical number 7000. And then the slender stream may widen out, becoming first a river, and then an arm of the sea, and at last the ocean—'the fulness.' Things take place gradually. Violent commotions are not to be looked for. Those who expect anything sudden in the conversion of the world are probably under a delusion. Revolutions of thought do not occur except in appearance, and to our eyes, from which the long advancing preparation has been hidden. The light may spread over Israel as calmly, and in such silence, as it spreads over the face of the moon,—of which one at last exclaims in surprise: It is full. Only this is said of Israel, that it shall not be full, until another fulness has preceded it. But how nearly full is not defined. Thus, simultaneously with the incoming of the Gentiles, Israel may broaden also into fulness. And on the fulness of Israel follows life from the dead. It is the prelude of the resurrection. He, therefore, who labours here, labours for the highest reward—for the crown of life itself. He removes the last obstacle that hinders the coming of the Lord.

Thus, he who preaches the receiving again of the Jews preaches the gospel—the glad tidings in the highest sense—to the Gentiles; for on their receiving again follows the resurrection life. And, on the other hand, he who helps forward

the conversion of the Gentiles, besides his direct work, becomes indirectly the cause of the conversion of Israel. The Jew is provoked to jealousy by them that were not a people, but whom he now sees to be the people of God. The sight disquiets him, and awakens memories within him. It fills his mind with the profoundest emotions, with regrets that cannot be stifled, and a longing that he cannot repress, with a sorrow as over lost advantages and over a life thrown away, and with the thought of a blessedness lost to him, and now enjoyed by others. This is the jealousy which the sight of Gentile faith shall awaken. And it is evident that, the more extensive and the purer Gentile faith becomes, the more powerfully will it react upon the mind of the Jew. And thus there is no probability that the movement towards faith among this people will be delayed, till all the Gentile world be brought in. The reason why the present Christianity of the world has so little influence on the Jewish mind is to be found, no doubt, in its superficiality and insincerity. The Jew sees no real godliness in it, and it awakens in his mind nothing of what the apostle calls 'jealousy.'

But to return to the apostle's argument. The principles on which he affirms this inbringing of the Jews are important: "If the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches."[1] "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."[2] The *root* here said to be holy is, of course, the same as the 'fathers' in the other verse, the early members of the covenant people, Abraham and others; and the 'branches' are the present Jews, the contemporaries of the apostle; and it is asserted that the same holiness which distinguished the patriarchs—of course, not personal holiness, but the consecration arising from God's estimate and act of choice—also distinguishes their descend-

[1] Rom. 11^{16}. [2] Rom. $11^{28, 29}$.

ants. The first-fruit could possess no qualities not possessed also by the lump, though, no doubt, it might possess them in some higher degree.

The love of God given to the patriarchs is unalterable. "The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance." What God chose was the seed of Abraham, the lump. In it He founded His Church; it He made His Church. For two millenniums it was the Church,—the great root, so deeply embedded in the soil, and so grown over with age. At the apostle's epoch, this mighty root should have retained all its natural branches, the then living Jews; but some of them were broken off,—most of them, yet not all. There were natural branches still. These were the true continuation of the root, the historic Church of God. Many wild olives were grafted in, partaking of the root and fatness of the olive tree. These were the Gentile believers, not inferior now in privilege, but not the same historic thing; more flourishing far than the natural branches, yet only grafts, not the natural branches,—not the continuation of the root except by graft. But the natural branches broken off, God is able to graft in again; and that He will is certain, for the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.

Now, does it not appear here that Paul is still handling Israel as a separate people? They were so in his day, and he so speaks of them. He holds that prophecies which mention their names in the Old Testament refer to them as a separate people, distinct from the Gentiles. God's election of them distinguished them. He began His Church in them. He made them the firstborn. He called them to be in the Church, to be indeed the Church. This calling was without repentance. Any Gentile dream that they were cast off was vain. Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. Does this not go further than a conversion of individuals as individuals? Does it not teach a corporate unity of Israel, which was in God's mind when He called them in Abraham?

Surely it is evident that the apostle considered this corporate unity to be still subsisting actually in his day, and to be going to subsist, till it again entered the Church actually, as it was always in it representatively as in himself, and virtually in God's election of it, as the Church-people once for all, which did not stand to Him as other peoples did, but was the root into which the others were grafted.

The distinction of Jew and Gentile was thus a distinction of God's creation. The prophecies of the Old Testament which refer to the last times still regard it as maintained. The New Testament not only thus interprets the Old, but itself expresses the same view. In many of the Old Testament prophecies regarding the final state of the Church, the nations contemporary with the prophet are introduced as still subsisting. But these nations have long since disappeared. Hence history itself teaches us, when interpreting these prophecies, to modify them in this way. But, obviously, the distinction of Gentile nations among one another is not an essential distinction. The obliteration of some Gentile nations does not obliterate the Gentile world. And the antithesis is Jew and Gentile. We cannot reason from the obliteration of some distinctions in the Gentile world to the obliteration of this great distinction of Jew and Gentile. And the New Testament still considers the distinction valid, and destined to continue till the inbringing of the Jews.

This is, no doubt, the way of speaking of the New Testament. But of course one may ask, is this representation not a representation merely of things as they then were? is it necessarily of essential meaning? The prophets represent the end as coming in the relations of their time, with all the nations then surrounding them still subsisting; may not the New Testament represent the end as coming in the relations then existing, without our being entitled to press the permanence of the relations? It is probable that even the apostle represents the unbelief of the Jews as so brief as to terminate

in the lifetime of the generation of then existing Jews; for he says, "They have stumbled, but not that they should fall." Yet we know how many centuries their unbelief has endured, —may his argument of their conversion in the relations then existing not permit in like manner of great alteration in these relations?

No doubt his argument may permit of great alterations, but would not this be an alteration of its very essence? Perhaps here we must be thrown back upon presumptions. And some of these presumptions seem against an amalgamation of the Jews with other peoples prior to conversion. For those great momenta of God's redemptive operation, essential to the full display of the riches both of His wisdom and knowledge, namely, the rejection of the Jew, the reconciling of the Gentile world, and then the bringing again of the Jew, seem to imply that, in order to the march of the redemptive providence being fully seen, the races must remain distinct. And it cannot be denied that the scope of Paul's language, as of all the Old Testament, is in favour of the same view. And where we have no certain grounds to go upon, it is reasonable to go upon presumptions. And if sufficient time have elapsed since the word of prophecy was uttered, regarding which we have only presumptions, to permit us to inquire towards which of the disputed fulfilments the ordinary providence of God in history seems pointing, we ought also to make use of that, and add it or deduct it, according as it favours or opposes the presumptions already reached. And certainly the continued isolation of the Jews, and their refusal to amalgamate with the nations of the earth, is a weighty fact which we are entitled to throw into the scale on the side of the probabilities already found, that the Jews will remain distinct till conversion.

These presumptions have, without doubt, a certain amount of weight. Yet, with regard to the first, we have seen that the three great momenta of the incoming of the fulness of the

Gentiles, the receiving again of the Jews, and life from the dead, though three distinct things, may not necessarily stand out from one another as abrupt and visible phenomena, or as great successive spectacles. The first two, at least, may go on towards their fulfilment simultaneously. It is the function of prophecy to signalise the principles of God's government and administration of the economy of grace,—to polarise, so to speak, the divine efficiency, and gather its operation, extending really through ages, into apparent points. But in actual fact such accumulations of divine force into points do not occur. It is only to the religious understanding and imagination that they appear in such a manner. The great principle of grace which the apostle sees illustrated in all God's treatment of men, namely, His concluding all in sin that He might have mercy upon all, will be made sufficiently conspicuous by the past unbelief of the heathen, and their present progress towards ultimate faith, and by the present unbelief of the Jews and their yet certain conversion, without the occurrence of anything resembling a catastrophe, or spectacular termination to the history of either process.

And then, as to the other presumption, arising from the continued isolation of the people, though there is weight in it, it is perhaps less weighty than is supposed. For, on the one hand, there can be no doubt that in the past the nation of the Jews has largely amalgamated with other nations. The captive tribes returned, but in comparatively small numbers, to their native land after the Exile. They gradually lost themselves in the nationalities where they lived. And this process of amalgamation still goes on. And, on the other hand, a certain refusal to coalesce with other nations is not peculiar to the Jewish people. Nationalities with strong characteristics are difficult to kill. The vitality of certain small nationalities even in our own country is remarkable. Another striking example may be cited, namely, the Armenians, who are scattered in well-defined districts

throughout the Turkish empire. Something may be done by such considerations to reduce the meaning of the continued isolation of the Jews. But it cannot be denied that it remains a remarkable fact of history, and one that must be allowed to have considerable weight.

The further presumption, arising from the manner in which Paul still speaks of the people in opposition to the Gentiles, taken in connection with the Old Testament prophecies, in which there never appears an amalgamation of the two, has also great force. Certainly that extreme anti-literal interpretation which considers the names Zion, Jerusalem, Israel, and the like to be mere names for the Christian Church, without reference to the people of Israel, does no justice either to the spirit of the Old Testament and its principle, or to the principles on which the apostle reasons. Therefore, what we have seen of the Old Testament prophecies and of Paul's reasoning alike suggest some such principles of interpretation as these:—

1. When the prophets predict restoration of Israel to Zion and restitution to their own land, these things are literal in *their* mind at least. They are not dealing with ideas merely, but with concrete things, with a literal people and with a literal land. This principle must be held firmly, or else no account can be given of the manner in which they speak. And it has been the office of the newer grammatical and historical method of interpreting the Old Testament, to insist on this in opposition to the older way of regarding these prophecies, which entirely disregarded the mind and view of the prophets themselves, and transformed their phraseology into mere expressions representing spiritual ideas,—in such a way that Israel became a mere symbol for Church of God, and Canaan a mere counter that went for spiritual privileges. This method is historically false, and gives no account of the form of Scripture.

2. But when the prophets speak of Zion, Canaan, Israel,

and the like, they do not mean these physical things merely, or this people as a people, apart from the spiritual significance. They mean these things as having religious meaning, or along with the religious meaning which they had. They combine the two things. These physical things and this people had a spiritual meaning, and it is no doubt principally as having this spiritual meaning that the prophets speak of them. Israel is never, to them, a people among the peoples; it is the Church of God. Canaan is never a mere earthly heritage; it is God's gift to His people, the pledge and token of His favour, the sacramental symbol and seal of this, in enjoying which they realised to themselves that they enjoyed His favour.

Now, of course, the conditions of God's treatment of His Church might change. The time might come when He desired to throw them more directly upon the spirituality of His favour, and therefore withdrew from them the outward token of it, namely, the possession of Canaan. Whenever God should extend the blessings of His salvation to other nations besides Israel, then Israel would have no more the exclusive privilege of being His people. If such a change should come, as we believe it has come, it is manifest that the prophetic language, while it lost its particularity, as embracing the physical things, would still be true on its spiritual side, which, of course, is its main side. Now, it is plain that this way of interpreting the Old Testament is adopted in the New, particularly by Paul, who says that they that are of faith are the children of Abraham, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, and heirs according to the promise.

3. But this mode of interpretation must not be pushed to an extreme, resulting in falsehood, which it is when Israel as the natural end of Abraham is obliterated, and 'Church' substituted in its stead. This is contrary to the apostolic reasoning. The Gentiles are fellow-heirs with Israel, and of the same body; but they do not thrust out Israel. Israel is still there,

and the Gentiles are merely grafted into its stock. In Jesus Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek; but there are both Jews and Greeks,—Jews first, and also Greeks. The Church of God is continuous. It is not a new Church in Christ, only a perfect universal Church.

Now, this conception, which is that of the apostle, allows justice to be done to the prophets of the Old Testament. When Isaiah, for example, predicts that "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," or when He says again to Israel, "Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles," his language is true. The latter statement is not to be metamorphosed and crushed into the featureless expression, 'The Church shall make conquests among the nations.' It is Israel, the Church, that makes these conquests. The Church was founded in Israel, and Israel remains in it; its vigour is from Israel. He who is the life of the Church was Israel. What the prophets affirm is that Israel, as the Church, shall be the light of the world. It is to misinterpret them and the Apostle Paul alike to construe them as meaning merely the Church, without inclusion of Israel as the historical stem of it. Now, this is how Paul argues that Israel is the stem of the Church and is holy, *i.e.* is still in covenant with God, not out of the Church,—although many natural branches be broken off,—but beloved for the fathers' sakes. It is on this principle that Paul infers the universal conversion of Israel.

4. But the ground being thus far cleared, there still remains the question about the literal restoration of Israel to Canaan, and whether the apostle gives any countenance to it. Now, this question turns on certain phrases which the apostle uses, and on the general scope of his reasoning. The phrases he uses are: "Even so then at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace";[1] "If the root be holy, so also are the branches";[2] "As touching

[1] Rom. 11^5. [2] Rom. 11^{16}

the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake"; "The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance."[1] These expressions imply at least the general idea in the apostle's mind, that Israel, though unbelieving, has not ceased to be to God what it ever was; that their unbelief cannot make the promises of God of none effect; that His choice of Israel, once made, is irrevocable; and that the same character of holiness, *i.e.* sacredness, attaches to the existing Israelites as belonged to their forefathers, the patriarchs,—in a word, that the covenant with Israel still subsists, and shall inevitably secure its purposes.

The whole question is, however, what really was the covenant? and what effects was it designed to secure? As the apostle gives no answer to this question in its general form, we can only infer his view from observing to what effects he argues upon the covenant. Now, he certainly argues only towards spiritual effects. He infers the conversion of Israel, but not one word escapes him about their restoration to Canaan.

In his interesting work upon the restoration of the Jews, Dr. David Brown lays hold upon the phrase used with regard to the believing remnant in the apostle's days, 'election of grace,' and argues that this is a different kind of election from that spoken of when the apostle says, "as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake." The latter he understands to be the national election, the other to be that election of individuals whose operation secures its ends within the wider circle of the national. And he argues that as it is upon this wider national election that the apostle reasons, and bases his belief of Israel's conversion as a whole, that conversion shall be a national conversion; and not only this, but as this national election was one provision of the Abrahamic covenant, he concludes that the apostle's argument may be justly extended over the other provisions of

[1] Rom. $11^{28.\ 29}$.

the covenant, one of which was the perpetual possession of the land.

There is undoubtedly some ground for the distinction between the two elections here drawn, for the apostle says that "they are not all Israel which are of Israel."[1] But I question whether Dr. Brown's general argument is a sound one. His argument is, that the election of grace is an election that secures spiritual privileges, namely, faith and its advantages. But besides this, there is a national election. Now, one asks to what end is this national election? What privileges does it secure? If he reply, the external privileges, such as a continued existence as a nation, and the heritage of Canaan, then Dr. Brown's argument may be good; but if so, he shows the apostle's argument to be bad, because it is upon this national election that the apostle founds his inference for Israel's conversion, as he says: "And so all Israel shall be saved."[2]

My impression is that the idea of a double election is not present here. The one election referred to is the election of grace, an election effective in the meantime, *i.e.* while the apostle wrote, to the faith of a remnant, but soon to widen out in its effects so as to manifest itself over the whole people. In other words, the apostle regards the Abrahamic covenant as a purely spiritual transaction, contemplating at the time when it comes into perfect realisation, *i.e.* in Christianity, only spiritual ends. We must carry with us, in estimating the apostle's argument, the remembrance both of the circumstances in which he wrote, and his views as to how soon these circumstances were to change on the coming of Christ which was imminent, and his idea, elsewhere expressed, of the Abrahamic covenant, and particularly of the time when it came into operation. When the apostle wrote, the body of the Jewish people were unbelieving, the bulk of the natural branches of the good olive tree had been

[1] Rom. 9^{6}. [2] Rom. 11^{26}.

broken off; but there were many believers, at least as many as in Elijah's days, keeping up the continuity of Israel in the Church. The unbelievers had stumbled, but not in order to fall. They as living men, individuals, would recover themselves and turn ere the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord, however imminent that coming might be.

The apostle argues upon the covenant with Abraham, and infers from it the conversion of Israel to Christ. But the covenant as given in Gen. 17 contains also a promise that the land of Canaan shall be given to the seed of Abraham for an eternal possession. The apostle does not refer to this. But those who plead for the restoration of the Jews to Canaan, argue that the apostle's reasoning may fairly be extended to all the elements of the covenant, and therefore to the promise of the land. Are they entitled to plead the apostle's authority? Certainly not his direct authority; only, at most, the analogy of his reasoning. But would he have acquiesced even in this? It seems to me doubtful. For what is the apostle's view of the Abrahamic covenant? His view ought to be well known. That transaction did not acquire its validity, till Christ came. "Now to Abraham and to his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, *And to thy seed*, which is Christ."[1] The reasoning here may be encumbered with difficulty, but the scope of it is perspicuous enough. The covenant with Abraham became valid when Christ came, and in the apostle's view it was a purely spiritual agreement, and contemplated exclusively spiritual ends. But does not this introduce falsehood on the other side? How, on such a view, are the other stipulations and promises of the covenant, such as the heritage of the land, to be explained?

Now, suppose we should not be able to explain this, it is proper to retain firmly in our minds the Pauline view, and to remember that he at least carries on his reasoning exclusively

[1] Gal. 3^{16}.

on the spiritual side of the covenant, or on the covenant as spiritual, and to be ready to point out to those who carry on a similar argument to his on the temporal stipulations of the covenant, that they do so on their own responsibility, and cannot plead Paul's example, because it is just to beg the whole question to say, as Dr. Brown says, that the apostolic reasoning which is carried on in regard to spiritual things may be extended to temporal things. The question, What view, then, would the apostle have taken of the meaning of the gift of the land? may not be easy at once to answer. The usual explanation, of course, is to regard it as a type of spiritual possessions; or, if not a type, a symbol, helping the people to realise God's favour for them, of which it was a material proof, a token and seal; a thing needful to them in their condition, when they could not realise God's favour without some material token of it. It is not certain, however, that this is the apostle's view. In another passage he says: "For the promise, that he should be the *heir of the world*, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."[1]

The usual way in which the difficulty is removed, is to say that the temporal provisions of the covenant were typical, *i.e.* prophetic of spiritual things. This, you perceive, makes these temporal things themselves have a spiritual meaning at all times, and lifts them up really into the spiritual element of the covenant; so that, though in themselves, of course, temporal things, it was not in this aspect of them that they entered the covenant, but as having a spiritual significance, and as pointing to the future. And the thing itself being come, to which they pointed, they have now themselves fallen away.

But even if we should not hold this strictly typical meaning of these things, that is, look at them as having future reference, but consider them symbols, and rather means of

[1] Rom. 4^{13}.

presenting to the minds of early believers the reality of God's presence with them, and His goodness to them, in a way suitable to their minds and times, the same probability will arise of their temporary duration. The Abrahamic covenant must not be confounded with the Sinaitic. The latter is now disannulled, the former remains. But the Sinaitic was a form of administering the Abrahamic; and it is quite possible that some things may have been put into the Abrahamic, with a view to this mode of administering it for a time, which were not of the essence of it, and which fell away when this mode of administering it gave place to a higher.

Thus the principles which we have to guide us seem to be the following:—

1. The prophets of the Old Testament, when they predict restoration of the people to their own land, are always speaking of the perfect and final condition of the people of God. It is the state which we now call the heavenly that they are describing; and they describe it as it would be, if it came in the economy to which they belonged, Israel alone being the people of God, and Canaan their heritage. But in interpreting their prophecies in regard to the final condition of the Church, we have to apply the principles of the New Testament economy.

2. The Apostle Paul gives the fullest interpretation of these principles. According to him, the Abrahamic covenant is a purely spiritual instrument, contemplating at the time when it comes into operation, namely, in Christ and Christianity, purely spiritual ends. The privileges are common to Jew and Gentile, and they are altogether spiritual. His object in these chapters in Romans is negative rather than positive; it is to instruct his Gentile readers in regard to the Jews, and do away with the erroneous idea that by their unbelief the Jews had forfeited salvation. This could not be; the promises of God could not be without effect—"All

Israel shall be saved." But he reasons exclusively on the spiritual side of the covenant, assuming that it has no other side, now that Christ has come.

The apostle is explicit as to the conversion of the Jews; he is silent as to their restoration to Canaan; he widens out the promise of the land to Abraham into a promise of inheriting the earth, that is, the new earth transformed; which, however, is common to Jew and Gentile alike. Thus in his view there is no difference of privileges; and all the privileges are spiritual. This is the final condition of things, as he conceives it, in Christianity.

3. With this view of Paul all the New Testament writers appear to agree except the author of the Apocalypse. They all regard the eternal state as supervening upon the second advent of Christ; and thus Jew and Gentile alike enter into the rest of God. And if our interpretation of Paul's words, 'life from the dead,' be right, as meaning the resurrection life which follows the salvation of Israel, there is no room for any restoration of the Jews to their own land. But the apostle certainly contemplates the distinction of Jew and Gentile as remaining to the end. That distinction existed in his day; and since he thought of the end as near, he contemplated that distinction as continuing on to the end. But there is no distinction of any other kind,—no distinction of privilege, nor any allusion to blessings not spiritual.

On the other hand, the Apocalypse regards the coming of Christ as introducing not the final condition of things at once, but a partial realisation of perfection only, to endure for a thousand years, when the saints shall reign upon the earth. Now, it is with this view of the Apocalypse that the restoration of the Jews has been combined. But it is doubtful if this view receives any authority from the apostle's argument. The risen saints who reign a thousand years are not Jews, but Christian martyrs, or others who share in the first resurrection. And, so far as appears, the reign upon the

earth may be common to Jew and Gentile, that is, to all who suffered as Christians. Consequently, any exclusive privilege of Jews seems not alluded to even here.

To sum up, therefore, the apostle's argument: that side of the Abrahamic covenant which promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and to his seed for ever, he widens out, as we have seen, into the promise that Abraham should be heir of the world. The land of Canaan was the sphere suitable for men in covenant with God. The idea of the Old Testament has been called a spiritual realism, a combination of the spiritual and the material. It starts from the idea of man as we know him. Now, man is a complex being; and a true inheritance must satisfy all the sides of his complex nature. Before Canaan was entered, it was thought of, perhaps, in some such way as we now think of the world to come. It was a place where God's fellowship would be fully enjoyed, and men would find rest with Him in a way adapted to man's nature. But when Joshua had led the people across its borders, they found it was not the rest of God. But the idea did not cease to be connected with the land. It was, however, postponed. The rest would be found in a transfigured world such as Isaiah paints in his 11th chapter. This would be in the last days, that is, in the days of the Messianic kingdom.

This transfigured world in the early prophets is still, perhaps, mainly Canaan. But in later prophets, or prophets whose point of view is later, it is universal: "I make a new heaven and a new earth." And this is the New Testament point of view. The heritage of Messianic man is the earth: "the meek shall inherit the earth." Abraham is heir of the world; the kingdom is given to the people of the saints of the Most High; and then this heritage, which may be called either earth or heaven, for that antithesis no longer remains, is shared by Jew and Gentile in common. This does not make the land of Canaan merely typical of spiritual

blessings. No; Canaan was the heritage of God to man, but over this heritage there pass such changes as necessarily accompany the changes in man's spiritual relations. This heritage is transfigured and expanded; it becomes the world to come, the country which the patriarchs sought, the heavenly Jerusalem, the 'all things' which, according to Ps. 8, are destined to become subject to man, the kingdom that cannot be shaken,—whatever eternal realities remain, after the things that can be shaken have passed away.

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